THE LURE OF THE HILLS

CITY OF SALFORD.

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THE LURE OF THE HILLS

Selected by F. H. LEE

LONDON: GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
39-41 PARKER ST. KINGSWAY
BOMBAY AND SYDNEY

First published 1928
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
39–41 *Parker Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2*

Printed in Great Britain by W. LEWIS, M.A.,
at the Cambridge University Press

PREFACE

IN this anthology are gathered together many passages—prose and verse—on mountaineering which, it is hoped, will communicate a little of the fascination of this subject, and thus enable the reader to share, in some measure, the mysteries and glories which are guarded so jealously by the everlasting hills.

For their generous permission to use copyright material sincere thanks are tendered to the following: The late Mr C. Lewis Hind for "Climbing a Mountain," from *The Diary of a Looker-on*; Messrs John Murray for "The Great Rift Valley," from Sir Frederick Treves' *Uganda for a Holiday*, and for "The Catastrophe on the Matterhorn," from Edward Whymper's *Scrambles amongst the Alps*; Mr E. H. Blakeney for "The Court of Kings," from *Footsteps of Autumn*, and "Swiss Pictures," from *In the Vale of Years*; Messrs Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., for "The Ascent of the Wetterhorn," from *Wanderings among the High Alps*, and "Balmat's Frozen Hands," from *The Eagle's Nest*, both by Alfred Wills, and for "A Winter Storm" and "Sunset from Mont Blanc," from Sir Leslie Stephen's *The Playground of Europe*; Messrs Edward Arnold and Co. for "Gompa Monastery," from Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. C. G. Bruce's *Twenty Years in the Himalaya*, for "The Abbot of Shekar Chö-te" and "The Legend of Tingri," from Lieut.-Colonel C. K. Howard-Bury's *Mount Everest: The Reconnaissance, 1921*, and for "Pen-pictures," from Walter Larden's *Recollections of an Old Mountaineer*; the Executors of Lieut.-Colonel P. R. Bairnsfather and Messrs Harrison and Sons,

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Behold the Hebrides!; Messrs Harper and Brothers for "The Ascent of Illimani," from Sir Martin Conway's *The Bolivian Andes*; and Mr C. R. L. Fletcher and Mr Humphrey Milford for "Switzerland," from A. D. Godley's *Second Strings*.

F. H. L.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
Introduction		13
Climbing a Mountain	*C. Lewis Hind*	17
The Great Rift Valley	*Sir Frederick Treves*	20
The Court of Kings	*E. H. Blakeney*	23
Hymn before Sunrise, in the Vale of Chamouni	*Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*	25
The Ascent of the Wetterhorn	*Alfred Wills.*	28
A Strange People	*Lieut.-Colonel P. R. Bairnsfather*	37
Gompa Monastery	*The Hon. Mrs Bruce*	40
Sunrise on the Rigi	*Mark Twain*	42
The Great Stone Face	*S. A. Drake*	49
The St Bernard Hospice	*Charles Dickens*	52
Alone in a Storm	*E. A. Fitzgerald*	56
A Dangerous Ledge	*E. A. Fitzgerald*	60
The Cragsman	*G. Winthrop Young*	62
Mount Pilatus	*Sir Walter Scott*	64
Impressions of Mont Blanc	*P. B. Shelley*	72
The Great Vesuvius	*Lord Lytton*	74

i. Vesuvius the Deliverer
ii. The Witch of Vesuvius
iii. Vesuvius Awakening
iv. Vesuvius the Destroyer
v. Vesuvius the Avenger

		PAGE
The Simplon Tunnel	*Clarence Rook*	88
Balmat's Frozen Hands	*Alfred Wills*	91
The Mountain's Secret	*Samuel Butler*	93
Tartarin on the Alps	*Alphonse Daudet*	101
The Magic of the Clouds	*John Ruskin*	109
A Strange Trail	*John Masefield*	111
The Abbot of Shekar Chö-te	*Lieut.-Colonel C. K. Howard-Bury*	119
The Legend of Tingri	*A. F. R. Wollaston*	121
Swiss Pictures I. After-glow II. Storm on the Summit of the Diablerets, September 1923	*E. H. Blakeney*	122
View and Vision	*D. W. Freshfield*	123
The Impassable Hills	*Hilaire Belloc*	126
Life on Mount Everest	*Captain G. I. Finch*	132
Rescue from a Crevasse	*John Tyndall*	136
The Death of Bennen	*John Tyndall*	141
To F. J. D.	*D. W. Freshfield*	145
To M. A. C.	*D. W. Freshfield*	146
Breakfast with the Prince of the Mist	*Theodore Watts-Dunton*	146
A Race with a Fog	*A. P. Harper*	155
Topsy the Dog	*A. P. Harper*	158
A Winter Storm	*Sir Leslie Stephen*	159
Sunset from Mont Blanc	*Sir Leslie Stephen*	160
The Song of the Himalayan Fairies	*D. W. Freshfield*	163

		PAGE
In Hanging Garden Gully	*C. E. Montague*	164
The Catastrophe on the Matterhorn, 1865	*Edward Whymper*	176
A Memory	*Guido Rey*	181
The Matterhorn	*Guido Rey*	183
Pen-pictures	*Walter Larden*	184
i. The Old and the New		
ii. Champéry		
iii. Ski-ing		
iv. A Legend		
v. Peasant Life in Switzerland		
Epitaph: W. F. D.	*D. W. Freshfield*	190
The Finding of Donkin's Last Bivouac	*D. W. Freshfield*	190
My Private Alps	*Alasdair Alpin MacGregor*	193
The Accident on Mont Blanc	*C. E. Mathews*	195
The Ascent of Illimani	*Sir Martin Conway*	197
The Ascent of Mont Blanc	*Alexandre Dumas*	203
Switzerland	*A. D. Godley*	216
Manfred on the Jungfrau	*Lord Byron*	218

INTRODUCTION

In the mountains, as perhaps nowhere else, the hunger of the imagination for what is vast and strong and leads to the infinite finds satisfaction. The sublime and the terrible, the joyous and the mysterious, the beautiful, the noble, and the sad—all are there, and they seldom fail to awaken a response in the soul of man.

When Odell (who with others waited in vain for the return of Mallory and Irvine from their last attack on Mount Everest) realized that the dread mountain had claimed his comrades for its own, he made valiant efforts to find traces of them. But the unconquered Everest seemed callous, and yielded none of its secrets, while the wind howled as if in derision. As he stood spellbound before that towering and defiant presence he was fascinated. It might demand man's last grain of energy, but it called forth also man's greatness and made him heroic. In that lay the enchantment.

> Behind the hills! a dream as old
> As Time our spirit fills.
> What undiscovered secret hides
> Behind the eternal hills?[1]

Among the Red Indians there is a belief that on the highest mountain, suspended from a crag overlooking a dismal lake, was an enormous carbuncle, which many declared they had seen blazing in the night. No mortal hand could hope to grasp the fire-stone, for it was specially guarded by the genius of the mountain, who, if mortal appeared, troubled the waters and caused to rise a dark mist, in which all became lost. This idea fired the imagination of the simple

[1] E. H. Blakeney.

settlers. Nathaniel Hawthorne has developed this idea in his story *The Great Carbuncle*. A strangely assorted party set out to search the Crystal Hills for the fire-stone. There was the fanatic and the scientist, the merchant and the poet, the cynic and the vainglorious boaster, and, last of all, a young bride and bridegroom. Each smiled at the "madness" of the others' reasons for undertaking the search; each held it possible of attainment, save the cynic, who journeyed just to show that the quest was a "humbug." When they were about to give up the search all except the cynic saw the dazzling light of the stone. They could not take the light captive, but at least they had seen it, and so they returned satisfied that their efforts had not been utterly useless. The cynic, however, refused to see the vision, and was condemned to wander ever afterward in search of the light he had ignored.

It is a parable indeed. Wrestling with difficulties, tasting dangers, seeking the unknown, learning Nature's secrets—these things possess a great fascination and are worth the quest. Hopes grow for the climber. The goal may vanish from the sight, but a voice from the infinite whispers "Climb!" and the best in man responds.

In his poem *The Court of Kings* Mr E. H. Blakeney has given us a vivid picture of the "mountain Monarchs" holding sway over their rugged kingdom in solemn pomp. Many are the quests which lure men to their Court, and many are the messages these travellers bring back to the human mind. Some have seen hung aloft in sky and mountain God's great pictures, and with the artistry and magic of their words they hold us captive. Others bring stirring tales of gloom and horror and mystery. Many in glad mood would infect us with their merriment and sheer delight of living, for their healthy spirits have breathed the freedom and life of the mountain air. In other faces we see the love of battle, of adventure, of noble enterprise, and of romance. No hardship brings dismay to them, and we too may catch the inspiring influence of difficulties overcome. Many upon the mountain-top have

heard the voice of God, and return to earth's duties with souls renewed, having learned in the solitudes something of the omnipotence of the King of Kings. Some travellers bear the marks of toil and service; they have tunnelled the mountains and surveyed the wastes, exploring unknown tracts in the quest for knowledge, in the preparation of an easier pathway for those who follow them. In humility we accord them a place of honour among men.

And there are many who will never return. They have paid the tribute of life itself, and they sleep always in the solemn stillness. Yet ever their spirits lure us onward as with snatches of music, for their death is not wholly shrouded in sadness. A nobility marks it, and into the sorrow there steals a pride in their undaunted heroism.

THE LURE OF THE HILLS

CLIMBING A MOUNTAIN

C. Lewis Hind

I HAVE climbed my last mountain.

Last Thursday afternoon I stood in a meadow at Sulden, and, staring skyward, blinked at the sunshine on the mighty head of the Ortler. It is the highest mountain in the Eastern Alps—the highest.

The next day, at four in the afternoon, I started with a guide. For an hour we scrambled over moraines and *débris* until we reached the foot of the Tabaretta rocks. There, had I been alone, I should have stopped, for those gigantic rock cliffs look about as accessible as the façade of St Paul's Cathedral. Without a word the guide began the ascent, the earth receding horribly as we climbed. For two hours I, panting, watched his back. There was not a crease of sympathy in it. He did not turn even when the winding, nearly vertical path changed to a flight of crumbling steps, protected from the abyss by a wire rope. I clutched it, swayed, fought the vertigo, and almost cried with joy when, half an hour later, raising myself on my hands, I tumbled like a sack of coals upon the tiny grass plateau bordering the glacier from which the Ortler towers. Close by was the Payer-Hütte, where we proposed to sleep. It was eight o'clock, and indescribably cold. I regained my breath, muttering between the gasps, "Never again!"

I peeped over the edge, and recoiled. I looked again. Yes! Somebody was ascending the path. He was a native. I gazed at him wide-eyed. On his left shoulder he balanced 10 feet of zinc piping; his right hand carried a bag of tools, and his left nursed the bowl of a huge hookah pipe, from which he

blew contemplative spirals against the sunset. He swung himself over the crest of the rocks, threw the zinc piping upon the plateau, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and said, "So!"

After supper I tried to sleep in a room which I shared with fourteen burly Germans and Austrians. The windows were closed. An evil oil lamp swung from a rafter. Before dawn heavy forms, one by one, raised themselves, generally with groans, from their couches, and heavy hobnailed boots tramped out into the unpeopled night. I too rose silently, with a white face. There were two small tin washing basins and two towels. But it did not matter. There was that awful mountain outside—waiting for me.

I drank my coffee shivering, and watched the dawn surprise an icy world. Presently a figure, whom I recognised as my guide, beckoned through the window. He coiled the end of the rope around my waist, and I knew what a turkey feels when it is about to be trussed. And—and—while I was being trussed, over my left shoulder I saw *the path.*

It was our path, for far beyond, spots of ink on the white snow, I saw the unfortunates who had preceded me moving across the glacier. How tiny the path was; how huge and ghostly the glacier; and how terrible the slope that went sheer down to death!

I felt a tug at the rope, and stepped out upon that path, trampled with the feet of my predecessors. Was it a foot wide? I doubt it. Inclining my body towards the landward side until my ear tingled at the touch of the snow, with eyes half closed to shut out the sight of the depths into which a false step might plunge me, I followed my guide up the mountain, passing from one dread danger to another. Anxiety, call it fear if you like, became chronic. I thought of nothing except that every step brought me nearer to the summit; but with that encouraging thought came the reflection—"True, but you've got to return, little cellular thing!"

The route was horribly diversified. There are things they

call crests, and shoulders, and ridges, and sometimes you hear an awful sort of booming movement somewhere, and the guide cries "Boulder!" Then the rope tugs you forward, and you both run and cower behind a rock. I know that sometimes, seeming hours at a stretch, my eyes never dared raise themselves from my guide's footprints in the snow. Once one of the preceding parties dropped an ice-axe. Warning shouts set us crouching, horribly apprehensive. We watched the axe bounding down the mountain-side, leaping higher at every bound. It flashed past us a few yards away.

And once I was left alone! We had come suddenly upon a gulley several feet wide. Beyond it was a wall of ice with rough steps hacked in it. A wooden ladder was balanced across the gulley. You could have pitched a flock of sheep into that gulley, and the gulley would have swallowed them all. The guide uncoiled several yards of rope. "I go up, up," he said. "You rest here tranquil! When you feel rope tug you walk up ladder. See?"

I watched him ascend the ladder and continue on all fours up the wall of ice. I was alone in eternity. I tried to light a cigarette. Hopeless! Matches and cigarettes were soaked by my frequent falls in the snow. Then came the warning tug. I crossed the ladder, embraced the ice slope, and was hoisted up like a bale of merchandise. "Dat is gut," said the guide as he received my body into his arms, dusted it, and replaced it on its feet.

"The summit lies at the highest point of a sharp *arête* of snow." That guide-book description must suffice for the last five minutes. I prefer to blot that *arête* from my memory.

But the summit! It's tremendous to look out upon a world of untrodden snow, peaks rising from every desolate field! The utter loneliness of it hurts. It's like standing on the North Pole. All around the sky touches the horizon. There's no hint that man ever existed. You, a foot-sore dot, with a heart beating like a mining stamp, are the centre of the universe. You are the first man and the last man—

encompassed by the beginnings of things. It's the creation of the world, and you have a seat in the gallery. The oppression of immensity, of awful, unutterable forces, of the eternal laws from which man can never escape, draws body and soul into the chilly soul of the Cosmos, and the toys of life—love, friendship, adventure, art, books, and righteousness—are as if they never had been. Standing there on the summit, I saw a thousand feet below three specks, men, roped together, gliding like serpents over a jagged ridge. Then the mist descended and I saw them no more. They were making the ascent by a route "difficult and dangerous." I had come by the "easy way."

Then we began the descent. The mist cleared and I saw where I should fall if I fell. . . .

In the afternoon I limped into the hotel garden at Sulden —worn, wasted, but triumphant. Luck was still with me, for sipping his coffee at a table was a member of the Alpine Club whom I knew.

"I've just been up the Ortler by the Tabaretta Rock," said I.

"Oh, the Ortler!" said he. "Then you've had a nice walk!"

From "The Diary of a Looker-on"

THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY

Sir Frederick Treves, Bart.

BEYOND Kikuyu the way is through an enchanting forest more wonderful and more beautiful than any alley of green the train has traversed. The trees, tall and slim, rise out of a reckless mass of undergrowth, their gaunt trunks appearing as grey poles against the deep impenetrable shadows. It is so dark and mysterious a place that if there were a path in the thicket one would expect to see

there, not affrighted natives, but a procession of cowled figures making their way into the gloom. It is curious in this un-English-like spot to meet with patches of bracken as well as banks covered with nasturtiums in blossom. Suddenly, while the eye is still oppressed with the heavy greens and purples of this pass in the forest, the train runs out into the open and there is seen, as from a mountain-top, an incredible valley, a rift in the earth so deep, so enormous, so awful, that the train, now on the brink of a precipice, seems about to leap into space.

There is no need to be told that the valley stretches far beyond the horizon; it is little gain to know that its width is over forty miles, or that its floor is sunk to the depth of two thousand feet, for the immensity of the Great Rift Valley seizes upon the imagination at once, and no figures can intensify the astounding impression.

The strangest feature in the spectacle is the sudden loss of all colour. From beneath the dense green arches of the wood which shut out the very sky one breaks into a world of flimsy mist spread out at one's feet apparently miles below. It is an unfamiliar world, blanched and pallid and lit by a light whiter than that of the sun. The walls of the valley are a spectral grey, its floor is unsubstantial as a cloud, while the gaping volcanoes springing from that floor may be but mounds of vapour. Trees near at hand stand out black against the nebulous abyss as clean cut as the rigging of a ship against the moon. The solid details of trunk and bough make the land beyond them more than ever illusive and unreal. There are no tints in this phantom valley that belong to solid earth, no firm outlines of boulder or crag, no substance underlying its level plains and its mirage-like hills.

It is a valley of suggestion, a valley of faint memories, of things partly forgotten. I doubt if any scene in the world can produce a sensation so novel and unexpected as that which is aroused by the first glimpse of the Great Rift Valley from the heights of Lamoru. . . .

The Rift Valley is a terrific trench slashing the continent of Africa, a great gash or rent in the solid flank of the world.

Surely this was one of the most astonishing convulsions that the world has ever witnessed, and of this mighty lesion the Rift Valley remains as the white scar. . . .

The train continuing westwards descends from the plateau by a zigzag road and reaches the floor of the valley at Naivasha. The details of the valley become gradually more distinct. The precipitous side of the escarpment is densely wooded and forms a confining wall of the deepest green. The floor of the valley is smooth and covered with grass, while forty miles away on the other side of the great depression can be seen the towering heights of the Mau escarpment, but so pale and faint are they that they may be made of ice with a purple glow upon it. . . .

The most conspicuous object in this part of the Rift Valley is the extinct volcano of Longonot. It is an immense isolated mountain rising abruptly from the plain with a crater on its summit. It is a mountain very difficult to get rid of, since it is possible to travel in one direction for a week and yet not pass out of sight of Longonot. Seen close at hand, it is a burnt-up cone curiously bare of vegetation. Its sides are deeply scored with a thousand gullies and ravines, which run vertically from crater to base and which are as precisely outlined as the ridges and furrows of a pleated cloth. These terrific channels give the mountain a shrivelled or wrinkled appearance, and were Longonot in England there is no doubt that these fissures would be recognised by legend as the scratch marks of the Devil's nails.

From "Uganda for a Holiday"

THE COURT OF KINGS

E. H. Blakeney

My sight is baffled by the mists
That clasp the mountain world;
Hardly I pierce beyond the veil
About their bases curled.

Cold as a starless sea, the clouds
Drift on their aimless way,
Half dimming while they half reveal
The gilded springs of day.

But far above that folded sea
The mountain Monarchs rise,
With crowns of snow, undimmed by Time,
And unbeclouded eyes.

Their feet are planted, firm and deep,
Far above mortal shock;
Their throne—the immeasurable ice,
Their feet—the unriven rock.

From strength to strength o'er trackless paths
Their banded terrors leap,
The loosened armies of the frost,
Grim powers that never sleep;

Whose horn is wound in twilight glens,
Waking the echoes there,
Reverberant to the eagle's cliff
And to the chamois' lair.

Behold the pines, in sombre ranks,
Their princely cohort be;
Their retinue the clouds that dream
In ghostly reverie.

And music haunts their iron hearts
By glimmering ridge and scar,
Where the Dawn-Angel lifts his sign,
And Night sits throned afar.

No shadow darkening human life
With horror of eclipse
May vex them: Death his seal hath put
Upon their pallid lips.

And so, being dead, they live for aye,
Stablished in sovran calm;
Yet nameless sympathies they yield—
The strong, unfailing balm

Of peace that, hid in darkest hours,
Soothes the world-wearied breast
With glimpses of no mortal things,
Hints of no mortal rest.

The brazen throat of War, the storm
That shakes a Nation's heart,
The long-drawn travail-pangs of Earth,
The wrangle of the mart,

The loves that lift, the hates that mock
Man's heaven-aspiring life,
Leave *them* unscathed, set leagues beyond
All touch of human strife.

Oft, a night-wanderer, I have seen
The pale, unsceptred Moon
Weave a rare splendour round their brows;
Or heard the distant croon

Of glacier-streams that hurry past
With unillumined feet,
To join at length—far off—the lake
Where the white waters meet.

From their dread presence go the winds
That, gathering in their might,
Sound o'er the rampart of the Dawn
The clarions of the Night.

How dread, within the gloom of years,
High o'er their royal state,
Moves the clear shining of the stars—
Ambassadors of Fate!

But slowly now, from height to depth,
The silver mists divide.
I stand within the Presence. Lo,
The Monarchs in their pride.

From "Footsteps of Autumn"

HYMN BEFORE SUNRISE, IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Hast thou a charm to stay the morning-star
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause
On thy bald awful head, O sovran Blanc!
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful Form!
Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,
How silently! Around thee and above
Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,
An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it,
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!
O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshipped the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my
Thought,
Yea, with my Life and Life's own secret joy:
Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing—there
As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven!

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and sweet ecstasy! Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake!
Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my Hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovereign of the Vale!
O struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink:
Companion of the morning-star at dawn,
Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald: wake, O wake, and utter praise!
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth?
Who fill'd thy countenance with rosy light?
Who made thee parent of perpetual streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!
Who called you forth from night and utter death,
From dark and icy caverns called you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
For ever shattered and the same for ever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and the silence came),
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

Ye Ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living
flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?—
GOD! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, GOD!
GOD! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, GOD!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!
Ye eagles, playmates of the mountain-storm!
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
Ye signs and wonders of the element!
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing
peaks,
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene
Into the depth of clouds, that veil thy breast—
Thou too again, stupendous Mountain! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,
To rise before me—Rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense from the Earth!

Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises GOD.

THE ASCENT OF THE WETTERHORN

Alfred Wills

HALF an hour's ascent over the herbage and among the boulders brought us to a stone under which we were to pass the night. It was a splendid wild scene—no distant prospect, but we were in the very heart of the crags and the ice—surrounded by some of the grandest glaciers and precipices in the Alps. I climbed alone a neighbouring height; the glacier by whose side we had ascended lay white and cold at its base; but the tints of the evening sky over the mountains which border the valley of Lauterbrunnen were wonderfully rich, while every peak and glacier around was bathed in a flood of purple:

O'er the vale
Light falls like a thick veil of golden motes,
And flings a glow, like a whole shower of roses,
Over the face of the vast precipice.
No sight beside, no motion and no sound—
Silence, the desert, and that solemn height.
. . . Heaven's eye, the falling sun,
Will soon be closed, and Darkness shall keep watch
Over her slumbering sister, Solitude.

I found our sleeping-den to consist of a low arched cave formed by two or three rocks, one of which, somewhat hollow on the under side, had fallen curiously upon the others, so as to make a kind of vaulted roof. Two sides were supplied by

the boulders on which it rested, and in the course of time the earth had so accumulated about them that all round their bases they were hermetically sealed, and the ground without was two or three feet higher than the floor of the cavern. . . . They gave me what they meant to be the place of honour—at the opposite extremity of the cavern, away from the entrance; but it was where the floor was highest and the roof was lowest (and it was nowhere high enough for a man to stand upright). When we were all arranged, the candle was put out and we were left in thick darkness. Suddenly the three Swiss struck up a hymn in German. They sang well; there was a good tenor and a rich, manly bass. The effect, in that strange place, in "darkness visible," crouched as we were beneath the shadows of the eternal mountains, was inexpressibly solemn; when the song of praise was sung, no one spoke, and presently the deep breathing all around announced that most of them were sunk in sleep. . . .

I passed a miserable night. I could not, however, fail to be struck with the solemnity of the place and time; all night long I lay in palpable darkness, beneath a hollow rock and on a bed of stones, with a foaming glacier torrent brawling past my head not six feet from me, save for the noise of which all nature was still and silent as the grave.

This profound tranquillity, however, was broken by frequent and startling interruptions:

> All in a moment, crash on crash,
> From precipice to precipice,
> An avalanche's ruins dash
> Down to the nethermost abyss,
> Invisible! The ear alone
> Pursues the uproar, till it dies;
> Echo to echo, groan to groan,
> From deep to deep replies.
>
> Silence again the darkness seals,
> Darkness that may be felt.

It was eight o'clock when we entered the cave; I lay uneasily for many hours, but at length I could endure it no longer; I spoke to Balmat, who was near me, and found he too was very uncomfortable, and we agreed to make our escape. We got across the sleepers somehow, and emerged. Oh! how grateful was that cool fresh air! how refreshing that draught at the mountain torrent! The stars were shining as I never saw them before in my life, like so many balls of fire in the black concave; the glaciers were sparkling in the soft light of the waning moon, now in her fourth quarter. It was just two o'clock, but not cold, and a bracing air blew briskly, yet pleasantly, from the north-west. I had been up before the sun many a morning, on many a mountain height, and had seen, I thought, almost every phase of Alpine night-scenery; but so beautiful a nocturnal view as this I never yet had beheld.

. . . It was still dark when, at the hour appointed, we set off, and for some time we groped our way by the help of a lantern. During the first hour and a half we mounted amongst a mass of *débris*, and amidst great boulders of rock which lie below, or form part of, the terminal moraine of the glacier. It was disagreeable walking in the dark, and we were frequently falling. Long before we reached the glacier, day had begun to dawn, and a cold, clear grey was stealing over the sky. . . .

At length we came to a very singular formation. Standing out from a nearly perpendicular wall of rock were a series of thin parallel wedges of rock, planted, with the thin edge upwards, at right angles to the body of the mountain, and separated from one another by deep intervening clefts and hollows. Each of these was two or three hundred feet in height, seventy or eighty in width at the base, but narrowing off to the thickness of a few inches, and presenting at the top a rough and jagged ridge, forty or fifty feet long, by which we must pass to reach the plateau which lay just beyond. We first climbed to the top of one of these wedges, and then had to make our way along its crest.

It was nervous work; a good head, a stout heart, a steady hand and foot were needed. Lauener went first, carrying a rope, which was stretched by the side of the ridge so as to form a protection to the next passer. Bohren went next; then came my own turn. It was certainly the worst piece of scrambling I ever did. The rock was much shattered by exposure to the frost and snow, and there was hardly a single immovable piece along the whole length. Every bit had to be tried before it was trusted to; and many were the fragments (some as large as a shoulder of mutton, and something of that shape) which came out when put to the test, and went crashing down till out of sight, making an avalanche of other stones as they fell. I passed my right arm over the top of the ridge, and thus secured myself, having the rock between my arm and my body, on one side, and the rope stretched below me, on the other. Everyone had to pass much in the same way, and it was a long quarter of an hour before we were all landed on the snow beyond.

A few minutes later we came to the brink of a precipice on the Grindelwald side, and here, for the first time to-day, we had a view of that rich and verdant valley, which looked lovelier than ever by contrast with the desolation which surrounded us. We could not only distinguish the village, but, as we thought, the inn, which, with the telescope, we made out easily enough. It was from the brink of a dizzy height that we looked down, stones that we kicked over were out of sight in a moment, and were heard, at distant intervals, striking against the precipice as they fell, till the sound gradually died away in the silence of distance.

...We now fastened ourselves all together with ropes, and commenced the last ascent. It lay near the edge of a long and steep *arête* which connects the Mittelhorn with the Wetterhorn; at the place where we gained the plateau, the ridge was nearly level, but almost immediately began to rise sharply towards the peak. We were now at the back of the mountain, as seen from the valley of Grindelwald, which was,

of course, completely hidden from the view. . . . The ascent was rapid, and commenced in deep snow; but it was not long before the covering of snow became thinner and the slope more rapid, and every minute a step or two had to be cut. In this way we zigzagged onwards for nearly an hour, in the course of which we made, perhaps, a thousand feet of ascent, having the satisfaction, every time we could look round, to see a wider expanse of prospect risen to view. About ten o'clock we reached the last rocks, which were a set of black, sloping, calcareous crags, whose inclination was hardly less than that of the glacier, left bare by the melting of the snow; they were much disintegrated by the weather, and the rough and shaly *débris* on their surface was, for the most part, soaked with the water that trickled from the snows above. Here we sat down and unharnessed ourselves. It was neither too hot nor too cold. A gentle breeze tempered the heat of the sun, which shone gloriously upon a sparkling sea of ice-clad peaks; contrasting finely with the deep blue of the cloudless heaven.

While we had been making our short halt at the edge of the plateau, we had been surprised to behold two other figures creeping along the dangerous ridge of rocks we had just passed. They were at some little distance from us, but we saw that they were dressed in the guise of peasants, and when we first perceived them, Lauener (who was a great hunter himself) shouted excitedly, "*Gems-jägers!*" but a moment's reflection convinced us that no chamois-hunter would seek his game in this direction, and immediately afterwards we observed that one carried on his back a young fir-tree, branches, leaves and all. We had turned aside a little to take our refreshment, and while we were so occupied they passed us, and on our setting forth again, we saw them on the snow-slopes a good way ahead, making all the haste they could, and evidently determined to be the first at the summit. After all our trouble, expense, and preparations, this excited the vehement indignation of my Chamouni guides—they declared that, at Chamouni, anyone who should thus dog the

heels of explorers and attempt to rob them of their well-earned honours would be scouted; nor were they at all satisfied with the much milder view which the Oberlanders took of the affair. The pacific Balmat was exceedingly wroth, and muttered something about "*coups de poing*," and they at length roused our Swiss companions to an energetic expostulation. A great shouting now took place between the two parties, the result of which was that the piratical adventurers promised to wait for us on the rocks above, whither we arrived very soon after them. They turned out to be two chamois-hunters who had heard of our intended ascent, and resolved to be even with us and plant their tree side by side with our *Flagge*. They had started very early in the morning, had crept up the precipices above the upper glacier of Grindelwald before it was light, had seen us soon after daybreak, followed on our trail and hunted us down. Balmat's anger was soon appeased when he found they owned the reasonableness of his desire that they should not steal from us the distinction of being *the first* to scale that awful peak, and instead of administering the fisticuffs he had talked about, he declared they were *bons enfants* after all, and presented them with a cake of chocolate; thus the pipe of peace was smoked, and tranquillity reigned between the rival forces.

Once established on the rocks and released from the ropes, we began to consider our next operations. A glance upwards showed that no easy task awaited us. In front rose a steep curtain of glacier, surmounted, about five or six hundred feet above us, by an overhanging cornice of ice and frozen snow, edged with a fantastic fringe of pendants and enormous icicles. This formidable obstacle bounded our view and stretched from end to end of the ridge. What lay beyond it we could only conjecture; but we all thought that it must be crowned by a swelling dome, which would constitute the actual summit. We foresaw great difficulty in forcing this imposing barrier, but after a short consultation, the plan of attack was agreed upon and immediately carried into execution. Lauener and

Sampson were sent forward to conduct our approaches, which consisted of a series of short zigzags, ascending directly from where we were resting to the foot of the cornice. The steep surface of the glacier was covered with snow, but it soon became evident that it was not deep enough to afford any material assistance. It was loose and uncompacted, and lay to the thickness of two or three inches only, so that every step had to be hewn out of the solid ice. Lauener went first and cut a hole just sufficient to afford him a foothold while he cut another. Sampson followed and doubled the size of the step, so as to make a safe and firm resting-place. The line they took ascended, as I have said, directly above the rocks on which we were reclining, to the base of the overhanging fringe. Hence the blocks of ice, as they were hewn out, rolled down upon us and shooting past fell over the brink of the *arête* by which we had been ascending and were precipitated into the fathomless abyss beneath. We had to be on the *qui vive* to avoid these rapid missiles, which came accompanied by a very avalanche of dry and powdery snow. One, which I did not see in time, struck me a violent blow on the back of the head, which made me keep a better look-out for its successors. I suggested that they should mount by longer zigzags, which would have the double advantage of sending the *débris* on one side, and of not filling up the footsteps already cut with the drifts of snow. Balmat's answer, delivered in a low, quiet tone, was conclusive: "*Mais où tomberaient-ils, monsieur, si, par un malheur, ils glissaient? A présent, il y aurait la chance que nous pourrions les aider; mais si on glissait à côté—voilà, monsieur!*" pointing to a block of ice which passed a little on one side and bounded into the frightful gulf.

For nearly an hour the men laboured intently at their difficult task, in which it was impossible to give them help; but at length they neared the cornice, and it was thought advisable that we should begin to follow them. Balmat went first, then I, then Bohren, and the two chamois-hunters, who

now made common cause with us, brought up the rear. We were all tied together. We had to clear out all the footholes afresh, as they were filled with snow. A few paces after starting, when we were clear of the rocks, I ascertained the angle of the slope was 45 degrees; but at every step it became steeper, and when at length we reached the others, and stood, one below another, close to the base of the cornice, the angle of inclination was between 60 and 70 degrees. I could not help being struck with the marvellous beauty of the barrier which lay, still to be overcome, between us and the attainment of our hopes. The cornice curled over towards us like the crest of a wave, breaking at irregular intervals along the line into pendants and inverted pinnacles of ice, many of which hung down to the full length of a tall man's height. They cast a ragged shadow on the wall of ice behind, which was hard and glassy, not flecked with a spot of snow, and blue as the "brave o'erhanging" of the cloudless firmament. They seemed the battlements of an enchanted fortress, framed to defy the curiosity of man, and to laugh to scorn his audacious efforts.

A brief parley ensued. Lauener had chosen his course well, and had worked up to the most accessible point along the whole line, where a break in the series of icicles allowed him to approach close to the icy parapet, and where the projecting crest was narrowest and weakest. It was resolved to cut boldly into the ice, and endeavour to hew deep enough to get a sloping passage on to the dome beyond. He stood close, not facing the parapet, but turned half round, and struck out as far away from himself as he could. A few strokes of his powerful arm brought down the projecting crest, which, after rolling a few feet, fell headlong over the brink of the *arête* and was out of sight in an instant. We all looked on in breathless anxiety; for it depended upon the success of this assault whether that impregnable fortress was to be ours, or whether we were to return, slowly and sadly, foiled by its calm and massive strength.

Suddenly a startling cry of surprise and triumph rang through the air. A great block of ice bounded from the top of the parapet, and before it had well lighted on the glacier, Lauener exclaimed, "*Ich schaue den blauen Himmel!*" ("I see blue sky!") A thrill of astonishment and delight ran through our frames. Our enterprise had succeeded! We were almost upon the actual summit. That wave above us, frozen, as it seemed, in the act of falling over, into a strange and motionless magnificence, was the very peak itself! Lauener's blows flew with redoubled energy. In a few minutes a practicable breach was made, through which he disappeared, and in a moment more the sound of his axe was heard behind the battlement under whose cover we stood. In his excitement he had forgotten us, and very soon the whole mass would have come crashing on our heads. A loud shout of warning from Sampson, who now occupied the gap, was echoed by five other eager voices, and he turned his energies in a safer direction. It was not long before Lauener and Sampson together had widened the opening, and then at length we crept slowly on. As I took the last step, Balmat disappeared from my sight; my left shoulder grazed against the angle of the icy embrasure, while, on the right, the glacier fell abruptly away beneath me towards an unknown and awful abyss; a hand from an invisible person grasped mine; I stepped across, and had passed the ridge of the Wetterhorn!

The instant before, I had been face to face with a blank wall of ice. One step, and the eye took in a boundless expanse of crag and glacier, peak and precipice, mountain and valley, lake and plain. The whole world seemed to lie at my feet. The next moment I was almost appalled by the awfulness of our position. The side we had come up was steep, but it was a gentle slope compared with that which now fell away from where I stood. A few yards of glittering ice at our feet, and then, nothing between us and the green slopes of Grindelwald, 9000 feet beneath. I am not ashamed to own that I experienced, as this sublime and wonderful prospect burst

upon my view, a profound and almost irresistible emotion—an emotion which, if I may judge by the low ejaculations of surprise, followed by a long pause of breathless silence, as each in turn stepped into the opening, was felt by the others as well as myself. Balmat told me repeatedly afterwards, that it was the most awful and startling moment he had known in the course of his long mountain experience.

We felt as in the more immediate presence of Him Who had reared this tremendous pinnacle, and beneath the "majestical roof" of Whose deep blue heaven we stood, poised, as it seemed, halfway between the earth and the sky.

From "Wanderings among the High Alps"

A STRANGE PEOPLE

Lieut.-Colonel P. R. Bairnsfather

On entering Ladak by the usual route from Kashmir proper, over the Zoji La pass, what at once strikes the traveller is the complete contrast in everything—country and people. On the other side we leave behind a lovely green land, luxuriant in grass and undergrowth, and glorious forest-clad slopes. On this we find a dreary waste of bare mountains, no grass or greenery, and not a tree, save where an occasional stream affords moisture for a few small willows or poplars, artificially planted, so effectual is the barrier of the outer Himalayas to the further progress of the monsoon rains. On the other side, again, we leave an Aryan people with oval faces and full beards. On this we are at once in the midst of the Tartar type, beardless, broad faces, and small beady eyes looking with a twinkling humour out of their narrow slits.

And the language, too, is of course a complete transformation. Proceeding we shall presently come to the first monastery and the first monks. The monastery will be perched high

on some isolated hill, or built into a steep cliff, having an indescribable look of loneliness and aloofness from the world, the situation having been purposely selected for its difficulty of access from below. Security from attack has probably had something to do with the selection of site, but the *idea* most strongly apparent, and forced, as it were, on the imagination, is that of aspiration toward immortal heights, and deliberate desire of detachment from, and superiority to, the world below.

As we travel further, a long, low wall will be encountered, running in the same direction as the road, and apparently occupying or blocking the centre of it. This is no dividing barrier, nor part of any fortification. This is one form of prayer, for every one of the countless small slabs of stone which cover the sloping roof of the wall is inscribed with the one universal and all-sufficing prayer—the mysterious, and to us (even when translated) meaningless *Om mane padme haun*; "Oh! the jewel in the lotus. Amen." These walls vary in length from about one hundred yards to a quarter of a mile, and one I saw could not have been less than eight hundred yards; from six to ten feet high, about twelve feet broad at base and sloping to an apex at the top. Think of the labour expended, not so much in the construction of the wall, but in the carving of all the prayer stones! This last is the work of the monks, and it is not a dead idea, for I found a carver at work on a prayer of more ambitious size on a rock face.

Then we have the small prayer machines carried in the hand and constantly revolved, a prayer for each turn, the strings of beads for ever being told to the same tale, and where there is a convenient stream there will be a wheel turned by the water, the mystic words in bright painted letters on its flanges. So it is all made easy, and all the vainest mummery, some may say. But surely there is something else! One cannot help seeing, or at least feeling, that there is an underlying idea, and that idea, however it may have since de-

generated, must have been a deeply religious one—a strong desire, if nothing more, to keep the reality of the other world daily and hourly in mind.

I visited Himis Monastery, and was fortunate in being able to do so at the time of the great annual gathering. The grotesque marvels of the pageants there have often been described—the monastery itself, built, one might say almost plastered, against a sheer cliff, which towers above it and sinks deep below, the labyrinth of dark passages, rooms and temples within, the vast store of holy books, the images and rows of chanting monks, the weird dances of the mummers in the several plays and shows, and the wonderful old-world instruments which accompany the performances. The principal play, as I remember it, was a representation of the torments of the unworthy dead in the Buddhist hell or purgatory. The wretched victims cowering in the centre, are surrounded by a throng of awful demons, fearfully masked and attired, and brandishing spears and tridents and other terrible weapons. These circle round with measured step, lunging at and ever threatening the unlucky damned, while the instruments rattle and blare louder and more discordant, and the demons howl, as each successive climax is reached. So it goes on from phase to phase; dresses are changed for fresh acts, each more awesome than the last, till a *finale* is reached in a whirling circle of gibbering skeletons. The whole thing might be laughed at, and derided, of course, but indeed one is under a spell at the time sufficient to restrain from levity, and no doubt it is fearfully realistic to the gaping crowd of onlookers. . . .

I had the pleasure of seeing in the flesh the latest incarnation—Kushok—of the old monk who founded the monastery many centuries ago. He was a pleasant-faced, though grave, lad of some ten years old. The priorship is not handed down from father to son, nor is it given by election. The prior is believed to live for ever, and on the death of one search is at once commenced for the new incarnation. This boy was

discovered far away in the east of Tibet, and had been brought to Himis only a few days before I saw him. I have forgotten by what means he was first recognized, but it was firmly believed that he had subsequently proved beyond doubt the accuracy of the selection by pointing out the last parts of the road, and recognizing all his own personal belongings on arrival. When I proposed to take his photograph, he flatly refused, with a look of some fear and entire disgust.

I was much interested to see in Sven Hedin's last book a notice of this same boy, and of his subsequent hard lot, condemned to live in a small dark cell for six years, alone and quite apart from the monastery, and never allowed to see a human face. This is by way of preparation for his great charge, and I am glad to think that his period of probation should end next year [1915].

From "Sport and Nature in the Himalayas"

GOMPA MONASTERY

The Hon. Mrs Bruce

[This is an account of experiences during a two days' sojourn at the Gompa monastery, in the Valley of Goolmatoongo, Tibet.]

As we passed the small village at the head of the valley some women ran out to look at us. They were very picturesque, though, as is usual with hill people, very dirty. They were well clad in thick woollen stuff of bright colours, and wadded felt boots which reached to the knee. Their thick black hair was plaited in a long tail, made longer by the scarlet and black woollen tasselled ropes which finished them off. But their adornments were really fascinating—silver chains and plaques, coral, and amber, and turquoise necklaces, and silver bangles from wrist to elbow. I think they had never seen an Englishwoman before, and I was stared almost out of countenance, and became keenly

conscious of the very poor figure I cut in their eyes in my Harris tweed coat and skirt and my thick boots, and no ornament but my wedding ring. The way to impress them would have been to don a satin gown and furs, and to have worn every article of jewellery I possessed. They were delighted with a present of tea, on which they dote. When we stopped for two days at the wonderful Gompa [monastery] the Lamas or monks came out in the most friendly manner and helped to pitch our tents. We were taken up to the monastery which stood an isolated pile within strong walls on the crest of a rocky hillock. In our stockinged feet we were allowed to go into the Gompa, which was indeed worth seeing.

Before the several Buddhas were little piles of votive offerings, and small brass vases of flowers; orange marigolds were the favourites, or perhaps they were the easiest to obtain in that desert district. The sacred books of the monastery were placed between wooden covers elaborately painted in Thibetan arabesques of green and scarlet on a white ground, and kept in carved racks. The head Lama, a most courteous gentleman, asked if we would like to hear their band, and to our great interest about twenty monks, some of them youths, collected in front of the Gompa. Their eyes fixed on the conductor's hand, they waited for his signal, some with eight-feet-long trumpets of copper banded with engraved brass, which gave forth deep booming sounds; some with flutes; others with cymbals and drums and various other quaint instruments, and then, with a clash, they started.

The general impression the performance gave one was that of a tremendous passage leading up to the main theme of an overture, only they led up the whole time, never arriving, and finally stopped suddenly. It was fine and yet almost pathetic, as if the sense of music were there, only feeling its way blindfold, stumbling now on the right path of harmony and again wandering into pitfalls of discord; and this feeling haunted me for some time; there was such passion

and wailing and chaos, but no light, no love, no order. And often I think of that lonely monastery and that band of monks and would-be minstrels flinging themselves against the hard walls of ignorance in the silence of those great mountains. For generations it had been thus, and no doubt will continue for many more. No sound of modern life or progress has as yet penetrated to that far-off Gompa.

From "Twenty Years in the Himalaya"[1]

SUNRISE ON THE RIGI

Mark Twain

At ten minutes past six we reached the Kaltbad station, where there is a spacious hotel with great verandahs which command a majestic expanse of lake and mountain scenery. We were pretty well fagged out now, but as we did not wish to miss the Alpine sunrise, we got through with our dinner as quickly as possible and hurried off to bed. It was unspeakably comfortable to stretch our weary limbs between the cool damp sheets. And how we did sleep!—for there is no opiate like Alpine pedestrianism.

In the morning we both awoke and leaped out of bed at the same instant and ran and stripped aside the window curtains, but we suffered a bitter disappointment again; it was already half-past three in the afternoon.

We dressed sullenly and in ill spirits, each accusing the other of over-sleeping. Harris said if we had brought the courier along as we ought to have done, we should not have missed these sunrises. I said he knew very well that one of us would have had to sit up and wake the courier; and I added that we were having trouble enough to take care of ourselves

[1] This book is by Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. C. G. Bruce, but the chapter entitled "Camp Life from a Lady's Point of View," from which the extract is taken, was written by the Hon. Mrs Bruce.

on this climb, without having to take care of a courier besides.

During breakfast our spirits came up a little, since we found by the guide-book that in the hotels on the summit the tourist is not left to trust to luck for his sunrise, but is roused betimes by a man who goes through the halls with a great Alpine horn, blowing blasts that would raise the dead. And there was another consoling thing; the guide-book said that up there on the summit the guests did not wait to dress much, but seized a red bed-blanket and sailed out arrayed like an Indian. This was good; this would be romantic; two hundred and fifty people grouped on the windy summit, with their hair flying and their red blankets flapping, in the solemn presence of the snowy ranges and the messenger splendours of the coming sun, would be a striking and memorable spectacle. So it was good luck, not ill luck, that we had missed those other sunrises.

We were informed by the guide-book that we were now 3228 feet above the level of the lake—therefore full two-thirds of our journey had been accomplished. We got away at a quarter past four P.M.; a hundred yards above the hotel the railway divided; one track went straight up the steep hill, the other one turned square off to the right, with a very slight grade. We took the latter, and followed it more than a mile, turned a rocky corner and came in sight of a handsome new hotel. If we had gone on, we should have arrived at the summit, but Harris preferred to ask a lot of questions —as usual, of a man who didn't know anything—and he told us to go back and follow the other route. We did so. We could ill afford this loss of time.

We climbed and climbed; and we kept on climbing; we reached about forty summits; but there was always another one just ahead. It came on to rain and it rained in dead earnest. We were soaked through, and it was bitter cold. Next a smoky fog of clouds covered the whole region densely, and we took to the railway ties to keep from getting lost.

Sometimes we slopped along in a narrow path on the left-hand side of the track, but by-and-by, when the fog blew aside a little and we saw that we were treading the rampart of a precipice, and that our left elbows were projecting over a perfectly boundless and bottomless vacancy, we gasped and jumped for the ties again.

The night shut down, dark and drizzly and cold. About eight in the evening the fog lifted and showed us a well-worn path which led up a very steep rise to the left. We took it, and as soon as we had got far enough from the railway to render the finding it again an impossibility, the fog shut down on us once more.

We were in a bleak unsheltered place now, and had to trudge right along in order to keep warm, though we rather expected to go over a precipice sooner or later. About nine o'clock we made an important discovery—that we were not in any path. We groped around a while on our hands and knees, but could not find it; so we sat down in the mud and the wet scant grass to wait. We were terrified into this by being suddenly confronted with a vast body which showed itself vaguely for an instant, and in the next instant was smothered in the fog again. It was really the hotel we were after, monstrously magnified by the fog, but we took it for the face of a precipice and decided not to try to claw up it.

We sat there an hour, with chattering teeth and quivering bodies, and quarrelled over all sorts of trifles, but gave most of our attention to abusing each other for the stupidity of deserting the railway track. We sat with our backs to that precipice, because what little wind there was came from that quarter. At some time or other the fog thinned a little; we did not know when, for we were facing the empty universe and the thinness could not show; but at last Harris happened to look around, and there stood a huge, dim, spectral hotel where the precipice had been. One could faintly discern the windows and chimneys, and a dull blur of lights. Our first emotion was deep unutterable gratitude, our next was a

foolish rage, born of the suspicion that possibly the hotel had been visible three-quarters of an hour while we sat there in those cold puddles quarrelling.

Yes, it was the Rigi-Kulm hotel—the one that occupies the extreme summit, and whose remote little sparkle of lights we had often seen glinting high aloft among the stars from our balcony away down yonder in Lucerne. The crusty *portier* and the crusty clerks gave us the surly reception which their kind deal in in prosperous times, but by mollifying them with an extra display of obsequiousness and servility we finally got them to show us to the room which our boy had engaged for us.

We got into some dry clothing, and while our supper was preparing we loafed forsakenly through a couple of vast cavernous drawing-rooms, one of which had a stove in it. This stove was in a corner, and densely walled round with people. We could not get near the fire, so we moved at large in the arctic spaces among a multitude of people who sat silent, smileless, forlorn, and shivering—thinking what fools they were to come, perhaps. There were some Americans, and some Germans, but one could see that the great majority were English.

We lounged into an apartment where there was a great crowd, to see what was going on. It was a memento-magazine. The tourists were eagerly buying all sorts and styles of paper-cutters, marked "Souvenir of the Rigi," with handles made of the little curved horn of the ostensible chamois; there were all manner of wooden goblets and such things, similarly marked. I was going to buy a paper-cutter, but I believed I could remember the cold comfort of the Rigi-Kulm without it, so I smothered the impulse.

Supper warmed us, and we went immediately to bed. . . . We curled up in the clammy beds, and went to sleep without rocking. We were so sodden with fatigue that we never stirred nor turned over till the blooming blasts of the Alpine horn aroused us. It may well be imagined that we did not

lose any time. We snatched on a few odds and ends of clothing, cocooned ourselves in the proper red blankets and plunged along the halls and out into the whistling wind bareheaded. We saw a tall wooden scaffolding on the very peak of the summit, a hundred yards away, and made for it. We rushed up the stairs to the top of this scaffolding, and stood there, above the vast outlying world, with hair flying and ruddy blankets waving and cracking in the fierce breeze.

"Fifteen minutes too late, at least!" said Harris, in a vexed voice. "The sun is clear above the horizon."

"No matter," I said, "it is a most magnificent spectacle, and we will see it do the rest of its rising, anyway."

In a moment we were deeply absorbed in the marvel before us, and dead to everything else. The great cloud-barred disk of the sun stood just above a limitless expanse of tossing white-caps—so to speak—a billowy chaos of massy mountain domes and peaks draped in imperishable snow, and flooded with an opaline glory of changing and dissolving splendours, whilst through rifts in a black cloud-bank above the sun, radiating lances of diamond dust shot to the zenith. The cloven valleys of the lower world swam in a tinted mist which veiled the ruggedness of their crags and ribs and ragged forests, and turned all the forbidding region into a soft and rich and sensuous paradise.

We could not speak. We could hardly breathe. We could only gaze in drunken ecstasy and drink it in. Presently Harris exclaimed:

"Why, ——nation, it's going *down*!"

Perfectly true. We had missed the *morning* horn-blow and slept all day. This was stupefying. Harris said:

"Look here, the sun isn't the spectacle—it's *us*—stacked up here on top of this gallows, in these idiotic blankets, and two hundred and fifty well-dressed men and women down here gawking up at us and not caring a straw whether the sun rises or sets, as long as they've got such a ridiculous spectacle as this to set down in their memorandum-books.

They seem to be laughing their ribs loose, and there's one girl there that appears to be going all to pieces. I never saw such a man as you before. I think you are the very last possibility in the way of an ass."

"What have *I* done?" I answered with heat.

"What have you done? You've got up at half-past seven o'clock in the evening to see the sun rise, that's what you've done."

"And have you done any better, I'd like to know? I always used to get up with the lark, till I came under the petrifying influence of your turgid intellect."

"*You* used to get up with the lark! Oh, no doubt; you'll get up with the hangman one of these days. But you ought to be ashamed to be jawing here like this in a red blanket, on a forty-foot scaffold on top of the Alps. And no end of people down here to boot; this isn't any place for an exhibition of temper."

And so the customary quarrel went on. When the sun was fairly down, we slipped back to the hotel in the charitable gloaming, and went to bed again. We had encountered the horn-blower on the way, and he had tried to collect compensation, not only for announcing the sunset, which we did see, but for the sunrise, which we had totally missed, but we said no, we only took our solar rations on the "European plan" —pay for what you get. He promised to make us hear his horn in the morning, if we were alive.

He kept his word. We heard his horn and instantly got up. It was dark and cold and wretched. As I fumbled around for the matches, knocking things down with my quaking hands, I wished the sun would rise in the middle of the day, when it was warm and bright and cheerful, and one wasn't sleepy. We proceeded to dress by the gloom of a couple of sickly candles, but we could hardly button anything, our hands shook so. I thought of how many happy people there were in Europe, Asia, and America, and everywhere, who were sleeping peacefully in their beds and did not have to

get up and see the Rigi sunrise—people who did not appreciate their advantage, as like as not, but would get up in the morning wanting more boons of Providence. While thinking these thoughts I yawned, in a rather ample way, and my upper teeth got hitched on a nail over the door, and whilst I was mounting a chair to free myself, Harris drew the window curtain and said:

"Oh, this is luck! We shan't have to go out at all; yonder are the mountains, in full view."

That was glad news, indeed. It made us cheerful right away. One could see the grand Alpine masses dimly outlined against the black firmament, and one or two faint stars blinking through rifts in the night. Fully clothed, and wrapped in blankets, we huddled ourselves up, by the window, with lighted pipes, and fell into chat, while we waited in exceeding comfort to see how an Alpine sunrise was going to look by candlelight. By-and-by a delicate, spiritual sort of effulgence spread itself by imperceptible degrees over the loftiest altitudes of the snowy wastes—but there the effort seemed to stop. I said, presently:

"There is a hitch about this sunrise somewhere. It doesn't seem to go. What do you reckon is the matter with it?"

"I don't know. It appears to hang fire somewhere. I never saw a sunrise act like that before. Can it be that the hotel is playing anything on us?"

"Of course not. The hotel merely has a property interest in the sun, it has nothing to do with the management of it. It is a precarious kind of property too; a succession of total eclipses would probably ruin this tavern. Now what can be the matter with this sunrise?"

Harris jumped up and said: "I've got it! I know what's the matter with it! We've been looking at the place where the sun *set* last night!"

"It is perfectly true! Why couldn't you have thought of that sooner? Now we've lost another one. And all through

your blundering. It was exactly like you to light a pipe and sit down to wait for the sun to rise in the west."

"It was exactly like me to find out the mistake, too. You never would have found it out. I find out all the mistakes."

"You make them all, too, else your most valuable faculty would be wasted on you. But don't stop to quarrel now. Maybe we are not too late yet."

But we were. The sun was well up when we got to the exhibition ground.

On our way up we met the crowd returning—men and women dressed in all sorts of queer costumes, and exhibiting all degrees of cold and wretchedness in their gaits and countenances. A dozen still remained on the ground when we reached there, huddled together about the scaffold with their backs to the bitter wind. They had their red guide-books open at the diagram of the view, and were painfully picking out the several mountains, and trying to impress their names and positions on their memories. It was one of the saddest sights I ever saw.

From "A Tramp Abroad"

THE GREAT STONE FACE

S. A. Drake

SIX miles of continued ascent from the Flume House have brought us to Profile Lake, which the road skirts. Although a pretty enough piece of water, it is not for itself this lake is resorted to by its thousands, or for being the source of the Pemigewasset, or for its trout—which you take for the reflection of birds on its burnished surface—but for the mountain rising high above, whose wooded slopes it so faithfully mirrors. Now lift the eyes to the bare summit! It is difficult to believe the evidence of the senses! Upon the high cliffs of this mountain is the remarkable and celebrated

natural rock sculpture of a human head, which, from a height twelve hundred feet above the lake, has for uncounted ages looked with the same stony stare down the pass upon the winding of the river through its incomparable valley. The profile itself measures about forty feet from the tip of the chin to the flattened crown which imparts to it such a peculiarly antique appearance. All is perfect except that the forehead is concealed by something like the visor of a helmet. All this illusion is produced by several projecting crags. It might be said to have been begotten by a thunder-bolt.

Taking a seat within a rustic arbour on the high shore of the lake, one is at liberty to peruse at leisure what, I dare say, is the most extraordinary sight of a lifetime. A change of position varies more or less the character of the expression, which is, after all, the marked peculiarity of this monstrous *alto relievo*; for let the spectator turn his gaze vacantly upon the more familiar objects at hand—as he inevitably will, to assure himself that he is not the victim of some strange hallucination—a fascination born neither of admiration nor horror, but strongly partaking of both emotions, draws him irresistibly back to the Dantesque head stuck, like a felon's, on the highest battlements of the pass. The more you may have seen, the more your feelings are disciplined, the greater the confusion of ideas. The moment is come to acknowledge yourself vanquished. This is not merely a face, it is a portrait. That is not the work of some cunning chisel, but a cast from a living head. You feel and will always maintain that those features have had a living and breathing counterpart. Nothing more, nothing less. . . . Ages before man was created, the chisel of the Almighty wrought this sculpture upon the rock above us. The face is too majestic, too nobly grand, for anything of mortal mould.

This gigantic silhouette, which has been dubbed the Old Man of the Mountain, is unquestionably the greatest curiosity of this or any other mountain region. It is unique. But it is not merely curious; nor is it more marvellous for the wonder-

ful accuracy of outline than for the almost superhuman expression of frozen terror it eternally fixes on the vague and shadowy distance—a far-away look; an intense and speechless amazement, such as sometimes settles on the faces of the dying at the moment the soul leaves the body for ever—untranslatable into words, but seeming to declare the presence of some unutterable vision, too bright and dazzling for mortal eyes to behold. The face puts the whole world behind it. It does everything but speak—nay, you are ready to swear that it is going to speak! And so this chance jumbling together of a few stones has produced a sculpture before which Art hangs her head. . . .

From the moment the startled eye catches it one is aware of a *Presence* which dominates the spirit, first with strange fear, then by that natural revulsion which at such moments makes the imagination supreme, conducts straight to the supernatural, there to leave it helplessly struggling in a maze of impotent conjecture. . . .

The face is so amazing that I have often tried to imagine the sensations of him who first discovered it peering from the top of the mountain with such absorbed, open-mouthed wonder. Again I see the tired Indian hunter, pausing to slake his thirst by the lakeside, start as his gaze suddenly encounters this terrific apparition. I fancy the half-uttered exclamation sticking in his throat. I behold him standing there with bated breath, not daring to stir hand or foot, his white lips parted, his scared eyes dilated, until his own swarthy features exactly reflect that unearthly, that intense amazement stamped large and vivid upon the livid rock. There he remains, rooted to the spot, unable to reason, trembling in every limb. For him there are no accidents of nature; for him everything has its design. His moment of terrible suspense is hardly difficult to understand, seeing how careless thousands that come and go are thrilled, and awed, and silenced, notwithstanding you tell them the face is nothing but rocks. . . .

Again and again we turn to the face. We go away to wonder if it is still there. We come back to wonder still more. An emotion of pity mingles with the rest. Time seems to have passed it by. It seems undergoing some terrible sentence. It is a greater riddle than the gigantic stone face on the banks of the Nile.

All effects of light and shadow are so many changes of countenance or of expression. I have seen the face cut sharp and clear as an antique cameo upon the morning sky. I have seen it suffused, nay, almost transfigured, in the sunset glow. Often and often does a cloud rest upon its brow. I have seen it start fitfully out of the flying scud to be the next moment smothered in clouds. I have heard the thunder roll from its lips of stone. I recall the sunken cheeks, wet with the damps of its night-long vigil, glistening in the morning sunshine—smiling through tears. I remember its emaciated visage streaked and crossed with wrinkles that the snow had put there in a night; but never have I seen it insipid or commonplace. On the contrary, the overhanging brow, the antique nose, the protruding underlip, the massive chin, might belong to another Prometheus chained to the rock, but whom no punishment could make lower his haughty head.

From "The Heart of the White Mountains"

THE ST BERNARD HOSPICE

Charles Dickens

In the autumn of the year, Darkness and Night were creeping up to the highest ridges of the Alps. It was vintage time in the valleys on the Swiss side of the Pass of the Great St Bernard, and along the banks of the Lake of Geneva. The air there was charged with the scent of gathered grapes. Baskets, troughs, and tubs of grapes stood in the dim village doorways, stopped the steep and narrow village streets,

and had been carrying all day along the roads and lanes. Grapes, spilt and crushed under foot, lay about everywhere. The child carried in a sling by the laden peasant-woman toiling home, was quieted with picked-up grapes; the idiot sunning his big goître under the eaves of the wooden chalet by the way to the waterfall, sat munching grapes; the breath of the cows and goats was redolent of leaves and stalks of grapes; the company in every little cabaret were eating, drinking, talking grapes. A pity that no ripe touch of this generous abundance could be given to the thin, hard, stony wine, which after all was made from the grapes!

The air had been warm and transparent through the whole of the bright day. Shining metal spires and church-roofs, distant and rarely seen, had sparkled in the view; and the snowy mountain-tops had been so clear that unaccustomed eyes, cancelling the intervening country, and slighting their rugged height for something fabulous, would have measured them as within a few hours' easy reach. Mountain-peaks of great celebrity in the valleys, whence no trace of their existence was visible sometimes for months together, had been since morning plain and near in the blue sky. And now, when it was dark below, though they seemed solemnly to recede, like spectres who were going to vanish, as the red dye of the sunset faded out of them and left them coldly white, they were yet distinctly defined in their loneliness, above the mists and shadows.

Seen from those solitudes, and from the Pass of the Great St Bernard, which was one of them, the ascending Night came up the mountain like a rising water. When it at last rose to the walls of the convent of the Great St Bernard, it was as if that weather-beaten structure were another Ark, and floated away upon the shadowy waves.

Darkness, outstripping some visitors on mules, had risen thus to the rough convent walls, when those travellers were yet climbing the mountain. As the heat of the glowing day, when they had stopped to drink at the streams of melted ice

and snow, was changed to the searching cold of the frosty rarefied night air at a great height, so the fresh beauty of the lower journey had yielded to barrenness and desolation. A craggy track, up which the mules in single file scrambled and turned from block to block, as though they were ascending the broken staircase of a gigantic ruin, was their way down. No trees were to be seen, nor any vegetable growth, save a poor brown scrubby moss, freezing in the chinks of rock. Blackened skeleton arms of wood by the wayside pointed upward to the convent, as if the ghosts of former travellers overwhelmed by the snow haunted the scene of their distress. Icicle-hung caves and cellars built for refuges from sudden storms, were like so many whispers of the perils of the place; never-resting wreaths and mazes of mist wandered about, hunted by a moaning wind; and snow, the besetting danger of the mountain, against which all its defences were taken, drifted sharply down.

The file of mules, jaded by their day's work, turned and wound slowly up the steep ascent; the foremost led by a guide on foot, in his broad-brimmed hat and round jacket, carrying a mountain staff or two upon his shoulder, with whom another guide conversed. There was no speaking among the string of riders. The sharp cold, the fatigue of the journey, and a new sensation of a catching in the breath, partly as if they had just emerged from very clear crisp water, and partly as if they had been sobbing, kept them silent.

At length, a light on the summit of the rocky staircase gleamed through the snow and mist. The guides called to the mules, the mules pricked up their drooping heads, the travellers' tongues were loosened, and in a sudden burst of slipping, climbing, jingling, clinking, and talking, they arrived at the convent door.

Other mules had arrived not long before, some with peasant riders and some with goods, and had trodden the snow about the door into a pool of mud. Riding-saddles and bridles, pack-saddles and strings of bells, mules and men,

lanterns, torches, sacks, provender, barrels, cheeses, kegs of honey and butter, straw bundles and packages of many shapes, were crowded confusedly together in this thawed quagmire, and about the steps. Up here in the clouds, everything was seen through cloud, and seemed dissolving into cloud. The breath of the men was cloud, the breath of the mules was cloud, the lights were encircled by cloud, speakers close at hand were not seen for cloud, though their voices and all other sounds were surprisingly clear. Of the cloudy line of mules hastily tied to rings in the wall, one would bite another, or kick another, and then the whole mist would be disturbed: with men diving into it, and cries of men and beasts coming out of it, and no bystander discerning what was wrong. In the midst of this, the great stable of the convent, occupying the basement story, and entered by the basement door, outside which all the disorder was, poured forth its contribution of cloud, as if the whole rugged edifice were filled with nothing else, and would collapse as soon as it had emptied itself, leaving the snow to fall upon the bare mountain summit.

While all this noise and hurry were rife among the living travellers, there, too, silently assembled in a grated house, half a dozen paces removed, with the same cloud enfolding them, and the same snow-flakes drifting in upon them, were the dead travellers found upon the mountain. The mother, storm-belated many winters ago, still standing in the corner with her baby at her breast; the man who had frozen with his arm raised to his mouth in fear or hunger, still pressing it with his dry lips after years and years. An awful company, mysteriously come together! A wild destiny for that mother to have foreseen, "Surrounded by so many and such companions upon whom I never looked, and never shall look, I and my child will dwell together inseparable, on the Great St Bernard, outlasting generations who will come to see us, and will never know our name, or one word of our story but the end."

The living travellers thought little or nothing of the dead

just then. They thought much more of alighting at the convent door, and warming themselves at the convent fire. Disengaged from the turmoil, which was already calming down as the crowd of mules began to be bestowed in the stable, they hurried shivering up the steps and into the building. There was a smell within, coming up from the floor, of tethered beasts, like the smell of a menagerie of wild animals. There were strong arched galleries within, huge stone piers, great staircases, and thick walls pierced with small sunken windows—fortification against the mountain storms, as if they had been human enemies. There were gloomy vaulted sleeping-rooms within, intensely cold, but clean and hospitably prepared for guests. Finally, there was a parlour for guests to sit in and to sup in, where a table was already laid, and where a blazing fire shone red and high.

From "Little Dorrit"

ALONE IN A STORM

E. A. Fitzgerald

We ate our breakfast shivering, and watched the long shadows slowly wane on Mount Tasman, while the sun, gathering strength as it rose, gradually dispelled the gloom of night from the deep valleys.

Our provisions were all gone, so I told Zurbriggen and Clark to go down to the Ball Hut and procure a fresh supply, and to come up early the next morning. I decided to stay meanwhile at the bivouac, to have a chance of writing up my journal, which I had not had time to do for the last few days, and to take sketches and observations of the surrounding ranges, which might enable me to correct some of the errors of the map.

I went out and got a fresh supply of water—an operation involving over an hour's work—as it was necessary to cross

a steep ice slope, on which we had cut large steps, and after gaining a small glacier to lay down flat on one's face on the edge of a crevasse to collect water that slowly trickled from an icicle.

After securing a couple of bottles of this water I turned to come back, but the mists had gathered to such an extent that it was impossible to see more than a few feet to the front, and I found it was going to be a difficult operation to find the tent again. It was already dusk, and I knew by the fitful blasts that whistled suddenly round the rocks that the night would be a wild and stormy one indeed. Moreover, the barometer had dropped very rapidly during the afternoon—an almost sure sign that the terrible nor'-wester was about to blow. The prospect of a night out did not please me under these circumstances, so I built a small cairn of stones at the edge where the stone slope met the ice, and started out in what I thought to be the right direction, making small landmarks by occasionally piling up a few stones, so that I could find my way back to the cairn, which I knew to be only about ten or fifteen minutes' scramble over loose stones to the tent, if I went wrong, and then start afresh. I found this hunt most exciting, perhaps too much so for enjoyment, for the prospect of a night out in the cold storm with no covering or shelter, and only two bottles of glacier water to drink was far from pleasant.

I wandered about for nearly half an hour, and then lost myself almost entirely, and could not even find my original point of departure, nor any of my landmarks. I was on the very point of giving up the search as hopeless, and of resigning myself to the cheerless prospect of a night in the open.

That a sane man in possession of his faculties, mental as well as physical, should sleep out of doors in the rain within a few hundred yards of his own tent was, I felt, an incident too ridiculous not to be carefully kept from the rest of the world, and I felt grateful to the solitude which made this possible.

As I pondered on these not very consoling aspects of my situation, I suddenly stumbled over an object which, on closer inspection, proved to be an empty tin that had once contained ox tongues. I immediately recognised this as one of the tins Zurbriggen had thrown out of the tent some days previously, so I at once started upwards, greatly encouraged and knowing that the camp must certainly be above me and not more than a few yards off. In two or three minutes I found it, and creeping in took off my wet things, overjoyed at what then seemed to me the great luxury of my surroundings.

The rain was already commencing, and I could hear the distant roar of thunder as the storm approached. The wind rose almost to a hurricane, and caused the tent to pull heavily at its moorings, while the sides flapped, making a noise similar to that of the sails of a ship (when she is taken aback). I got up and leaned my back against the end, holding the two poles in my hands and trying to steady the structure, but all my strength seemed as nothing against the force of the wind. I feared that the canvas would be rent open, so great was the strain on it, and that the guy-rope which I could hear and even feel chafing against a projecting rock would give way. If this had happened the tent would have been hurled down the great *couloir* that leads to the Hochstetter Glacier, and as the floor of it was sewn to the sides I should have been dragged down with it, an unwilling passenger in an improvised balloon.

I had with me several lengths of Alpine rope, so thought I would venture out and supplement the guy-rope with one of these. It was not an easy operation, for such was the fury of the wind that it was impossible even to stand upright on the loose stones round the tent, and I was reduced to crawling along on hands and knees.

It was past 10 P.M. and as dark as pitch, so that I could not even see my hands. I had left a candle burning in one of the lanterns inside the tent, thinking I should get such light as filtered through the canvas, but as I had left a flap of the tent

open, on coming out, an eddy of wind must have rushed in and extinguished it. I felt my way as I went and before long found the guy-rope.

It was as stiff as a rod of iron, with the excessive tension on it, but I managed to fasten the new rope to the tent poles and to secure it round a great boulder that I thought would surely be solid enough to bear the strain without moving. I crept back to the tent, drenched to the skin by this adventure, but quite repaid for my exertion by the knowledge that with this second rope nothing could blow the tent away.

Towards midnight, while the storm was at its height, I heard a tremendous rattle, followed by a loud crash, and the rock under me seemed shaken to its very foundations. At the same time I heard a sharp report quite near to me. My first idea was that the rock was struck by lightning, but there was no flash. Then the sharp noise was repeated, and then came a terrible rushing sound.

I at last realised that an extensive fall of rocks was taking place down the *couloir*, and that some of them had struck the great boulder under which I lay. The same thing happened again later on, but fortunately none of the stones fell on the tent itself, or on the guy-rope that supported it.

I kept the lantern burning and sat up smoking the whole night, propped up against the end of the tent to give it the extra weight and support of my body. The lightning was vivid and struck near me several times, while the thunder, following almost instantaneously, seemed to shake and rend the mountain to its base.

Soon after midnight the storm gradually abated, passing away down the Tasman Valley.

From "Climbs in the New Zealand Alps"

A DANGEROUS LEDGE

E. A. Fitzgerald

ZURBRIGGEN was scarcely able to walk, and, as Harper could not keep his feet, we were altogether in a very unpleasant predicament. It was utterly impossible to spend the night where we were, hanging on to narrow ledges of rock covered with thin ice, so we were obliged slowly to retrace our steps for a little, till we should reach a spot where, I thought, it might be possible to spend the night. This was a ledge some fourteen feet long and eighteen inches broad, on which the three of us could just manage to sit. It seemed to us as sheltered a place as any upon this slope, but should any great fall of stones really come down upon us in the night, I feared that we should have but a small chance of escape.

No sooner had we seated ourselves than we heard the ominous whizz of falling stones. This was but the commencement of a cannonade that we found was to be kept up at intervals throughout the night. The rocks flew past us, so close at times that we could almost feel the wind from them on our faces. We never dared so much as close an eye all night, for fear of slipping into the abyss below.

The cold became intense, the thermometer dropping to 25°, and as most of our garments had been soaked in wading through the melting snow during the day, our things froze hard. Harper took off his boots and placed his feet into his knapsack or "swag," as the Colonials call it, so that, had he fallen, he could not possibly have recovered himself. Zurbriggen also took off his boots and sat upon them to keep them warm for the morning, lest they should become frozen tight and he would not be able to get into them again. We did our best to keep up our spirits through that long night, singing songs, the most appropriate of which seemed to us, at the time, to be *We won't go home till morning.*

There was no moon and the night was intensely dark, though the weather was clear, while the slight breezes from the south-west seemed to chill us to the very bone. After midnight we gradually became more silent and did not even talk, while Harper dozed for a moment or two and nearly tumbled off. I had to catch hold of him and retain my grip till he could regain his balance. It then occurred to us that if we spread one of the pieces of mackintosh sheeting over our heads, lighting some candles beneath it, we should be warmer.

One of the reasons which led us to make this discovery was that, when Zurbriggen had lighted one of the lamps, he wanted to have the pleasure of seeing smoke from his pipe, as otherwise he would not have known whether it was drawing or not. He had gradually let the lantern drop down to his knees, and had pulled up the mackintosh covering over him, and said that he felt warmer.

We found this plan of spreading a sheet of mackintosh over us most successful, and we kept on lighting plenty of candles, so that we could warm our fingers at them and still remain seated in our cramped position. Luckily we still had an ample supply of candles, so that it was possible to continue in this way till dawn began to appear. It seemed to us as if we had been seated for weeks on this ridge, and when it was light enough for us to move we were so stiff that it was with difficulty we gained our feet.

We now began making preparations for our departure. Our rope was like an iron bar, and our clothes would not give to our motion at all. Harper's boots were frozen so tight that he was obliged to cut them open and burn innumerable candle-ends inside them before he succeeded in getting them to go on. I had kept on my boots all night, as I knew how much trouble I should have in putting them on again in the morning if I took them off. Zurbriggen, however, was the very best of us all, for his scheme of sitting on his boots and warming them had acted most admirably, though during

the night he had complained several times that the nails in them were rather hard.

In ten minutes or so we succeeded in reaching the glacier from here, and then for the first time perceived that what we had taken for a great *Bergschrund* was nothing more or less than a heap of stones.

I now began to look about for my photographs and papers [which had fallen far below out of Mr Harper's knapsack] and found that they had been caught up in their downward course by an abrupt ledge of ice, and were thus saved from being totally lost in the great *moulin*, which led down into some torrent beneath the glacier.

This was certainly a narrow escape, for had I lost these, half of the fruits of my expedition would have been destroyed. . . .

We were extremely stiff, all of us, and for some distance literally limped along. However, when the sun rose it gradually thawed us, and we were able to make better time. . . .

At about 10 A.M. we reached the Ball Hut, and made a rush for the food that was there, and soon we forgot the miseries and privations of the last four days in what seemed to us the luxurious comfort of this extremely primitive galvanised iron hut.

From "Climbs in the New Zealand Alps"

THE CRAGSMAN

G. Winthrop Young

In this short span
between my finger-tips on the smooth edge
and these tense feet cramped on the crystal ledge
I hold the life of man.
Consciously I embrace
arched from the mountain rock on which I stand
to the firm limit of my lifted hand
the front of time and space:—

For what is there in all the world for me
but what I know and see?
And what remains of all I see and know
if I let go?

. . . . . .

With this full breath
bracing my sinews as I upward move
boldly reliant to the rift above
I measure life from death.
With each strong thrust
I feel all motion and all vital force
borne on my strength and hazarding their course
in my self-trust:—
There is no movement of what kind it be
but has its source in me;
and should these muscles falter to release
motion itself must cease.

. . . . . .

In these two eyes
that search the splendour of the earth, and seek
the sombre mysteries on plain and peak,
all vision wakes and dies.
With these my ears
that listen for the sound of lakes asleep
and love the larger rumour from the deep,
the eternal hears:—
For all of beauty that this life can give
lives only while I live
and with the light my hurried vision lends
all beauty ends.

From "Freedom"

MOUNT PILATUS

Sir Walter Scott

Two travellers, one considerably past the prime of life, the other probably two or three-and-twenty years old, had passed the night at the little town of Lucerne. Their dress and character seemed those of merchants of a higher class, and while they themselves journeyed on foot, the character of the country rendering that by far the most easy mode of pursuing their route, a young peasant lad from the Italian side of the Alps followed them with a sumpter mule, laden apparently with men's wares and baggage, which he sometimes mounted, but more frequently led by the bridle. . . .

The merchants, leaving Lucerne the next morning, resumed their toilsome journey, preferring a circuitous route and bad roads, through the peaceful cantons of Switzerland, to encountering the exactions and rapine of the robber chivalry of Germany, who, like so many sovereigns, made war each at his own pleasure, and levied tolls and taxes on every one who passed their domains of a mile's breadth, with all the insolence of petty tyranny.

For several hours after leaving Lucerne, the journey of our travellers was successfully prosecuted. The road, though precipitous and difficult, was rendered interesting by those splendid phenomena, which no country exhibits in a more astonishing manner than the mountains of Switzerland, where the rocky pass, the verdant valley, the broad lake, and the rushing torrent, the attributes of other hills as well as these, are interspersed with the magnificent and yet fearful horrors of the glaciers, a feature peculiar to themselves.

It was not an age in which the beauties or grandeur of a landscape made much impression either on the minds of those who travelled through the country, or who resided in it. To the latter, the objects, however dignified, were familiar,

and associated with daily habits and with daily toil; and the former saw, perhaps, more terror than beauty in the wild region through which they passed, and were rather solicitous to get safe to their night's quarters, than to comment on the grandeur of the scenes which lay between them and their place of rest. Yet our merchants, as they proceeded on their journey, could not help being strongly impressed by the character of the scenery around them. Their road lay along the side of the lake, at times level and close on its very margin, at times rising to a great height on the side of the mountain, and winding along the verge of precipices which sunk down to the water as sharp and sheer as the wall of a castle descending upon the ditch which defends it. At other times it traversed spots of a milder character,—delightful green slopes, and lowly retired valleys, affording both pasturage and arable ground, sometimes watered by small streams, which winded by the hamlet of wooden huts with their fantastic little church and steeple, meandered round the orchard and the mount of vines, and, murmuring gently as they flowed, found a quiet passage into the lake.

"That stream, Arthur," said the elder traveller, as with one consent they stopped to gaze on such a scene as I have described, "resembles the life of a good and a happy man."

"And the brook which hurries itself headlong down yon distant hill, marking its course by a streak of white foam," answered Arthur,—"what does that resemble?"

"That of a brave and unfortunate one," replied his father.

"The torrent for me," said Arthur; "a headlong course which no human force can oppose, and then let it be as brief as it is glorious."

"It is a young man's thought," replied his father; "but I am well aware that it is so rooted in thy heart that nothing but the rude hand of adversity can pluck it up."

"As yet the root clings fast to my heart's strings," said the young man; "and methinks adversity's hand hath had a fair grasp of it."

"You speak, my son, of what you little understand," said his father. "Know, that till the middle of life be passed, men scarce distinguish true prosperity from adversity, or rather they court as the favours of fortune what they should more justly regard as the marks of her displeasure. Look at yonder mountain, which wears on its shaggy brow a diadem of clouds, now raised and now depressed, while the sun glances upon it, but is unable to dispel it;—a child might believe it to be a crown of glory—a man knows it to be the signal of tempest."

Arthur followed the direction of his father's eye to the dark and shadowy eminence of Mount Pilatre.

"Is the mist on yonder wild mountain so ominous then?" asked the young man.

"Demand of Antonio," said his father; "he will tell you the legend."

The young merchant addressed himself to the Swiss lad who acted as their attendant, desiring to know the name of the gloomy height, which, in that quarter, seems the leviathan of the huge congregation of mountains assembled about Lucerne.

The lad crossed himself devoutly, as he recounted the popular legend, that the wicked Pontius Pilate, Proconsul of Judea, had here found the termination of his impious life; having, after spending years in the recesses of that mountain which bears his name, at length, in remorse and despair, rather than in penitence, plunged into the dismal lake which occupies the summit. Whether water refused to do the executioner's duty upon such a wretch, or whether, his body being drowned, his vexed spirit continued to haunt the place where he committed suicide, Antonio did not pretend to explain. But a form was often, he said, seen to emerge from the gloomy waters, and go through the action of one washing his hands; and when he did so, dark clouds of mist gathered first round the bosom of the Infernal Lake (such it had been styled of old), and then, wrapping the whole upper part of the mountain in darkness, presaged a tempest or hurricane,

which was sure to follow in a short space. He added, that the evil spirit was peculiarly exasperated at the audacity of such strangers as ascended the mountain to gaze at his place of punishment, and that, in consequence, the magistrates of Lucerne had prohibited any one from approaching Mount Pilatre, under severe penalties. Antonio once more crossed himself as he finished his legend; in which act of devotion he was imitated by his hearers, too good Catholics to entertain any doubt of the truth of the story.

"How the accursed heathen scowls upon us!" said the younger of the merchants, while the cloud darkened and seemed to settle on the brow of Mount Pilatre. "*Vade retro;* —be thou defied, sinner!"

A rising wind, rather heard than felt, seemed to groan forth, in the tone of a dying lion, the acceptance of the suffering spirit to the rash challenge of the young Englishman. The mountain was seen to send down its rugged sides thick wreaths of heaving mist, which, rolling through the rugged chasms that seamed the grisly hill, resembled torrents of rushing lava pouring down from a volcano. The ridgy precipices, which formed the sides of these huge ravines, showed their splintery and rugged edges over the vapour, as if dividing from each other the descending streams of mist which rolled around them. As a strong contrast to this gloomy and threatening scene, the more distant mountain range of Righi shone brilliant with all the hues of an autumnal sun.

While the travellers watched this striking and varied contrast, which resembled an approaching combat betwixt the powers of Light and Darkness, their guide, in his mixed jargon of Italian and German, exhorted them to make haste on their journey. The village to which he proposed to conduct them, he said, was yet distant, the road bad, and difficult to find, and if the Evil One (looking to Mount Pilatre, and crossing himself) should send his darkness upon the valley, the path would be both doubtful and dangerous. The travellers, thus admonished, gathered the capes of their cloaks close

round their throats, pulled their bonnets resolvedly over their brows, drew the buckle of the broad belts which fastened their mantles, and each with a mountain staff in his hand, well shod with an iron spike, they pursued their journey, with unabated strength and undaunted spirit.

With every step the scenes around them appeared to change. Each mountain, as if its firm and immutable form were flexible and varying, altered in appearance, like that of a shadowy apparition, as the position of the strangers relative to them changed with their motions, and as the mist, which continued slowly though constantly to descend, influenced the rugged aspect of the hills and valleys which it shrouded with its vapoury mantle. The nature of their progress, too, never direct, but winding by a narrow path along the sinuosities of the valley, and making many a circuit round precipices and other obstacles which it was impossible to surmount, added to the wild variety of a journey, in which, at last, the travellers totally lost any vague idea which they had previously entertained concerning the direction in which the road led them.

"I would," said the elder, "we had that mystical needle which mariners talk of, that points ever to the north, and enables them to keep their way on the waters, when there is neither cape nor headland, sun, moon, nor stars, nor any mark in heaven or earth to tell them how to steer."

"It would scarce avail us among these mountains," answered the youth; "for though that wonderful needle may keep its point to the northern Pole-star, when it is on a flat surface like the sea, it is not to be thought it would do so when these huge mountains arise like walls, betwixt the steel and the object of its sympathy."

"I fear me," replied the father, "we shall find our guide, who has been growing hourly more stupid since he left his own valley, as useless as you suppose the compass would be among the hills of this wild country. . . ."

They moved on as before, with this difference, that the

guide, leading the mule, now went first, and was followed by the other two, whose motions he had formerly directed by calling to them from behind. The clouds meantime became thicker and thicker, and the mist, which had at first been a thin vapour, began now to descend in the form of a small thick rain, which gathered like dew upon the capotes of the travellers. Distant rustling and groaning sounds were heard among the remote mountains, similar to those by which the Evil Spirit of Mount Pilatre had seemed to announce the storm. The boy again pressed his companions to advance, but at the same time threw impediments in the way of their doing so, by the slowness and indecision which he showed in leading them on.

Having proceeded in this manner for three or four miles, which uncertainty rendered doubly tedious, the travellers were at length engaged in a narrow path, running along the verge of a precipice. . . .

Hitherto the path, though steep and rugged, was plainly enough indicated, and showed traces of having been used both by riders and foot passengers. But suddenly, as Antonio with the loaded mule had reached a projecting eminence, around the peak of which the path made a sharp turn, he stopped short, with his usual exclamation, addressed to his patron saint. It appeared to Arthur that the mule shared the terrors of the guide; for it started back, put forwards its fore-feet separate from each other, and seemed, by the attitude which it assumed, to intimate a determination to resist every proposal to advance, at the same time expressing horror and fear at the prospect which lay before it.

Arthur pressed forward, not only from curiosity, but that he might if possible bear the brunt of any danger before his father came up to share it. In less time than we have taken to tell the story, the young man stood beside Antonio and the mule, upon a platform of rock on which the road seemed absolutely to terminate, and from the farther side of which a precipice sunk sheer down, to what depth the mist did not

permit him to discern, but certainly uninterrupted for more than three hundred feet. . . .

As they stood uncertain what to do next . . . a loud howl of the wind, more wild than they had yet heard, swept down the valley. All being aware of the danger of being hurled from the precarious station which they occupied, snatched at bushes and rocks by which to secure themselves, and even the poor mule seemed to steady itself in order to withstand the approaching hurricane. The gust came with such unexpected fury that it appeared to the travellers to shake the very rock on which they stood, and would have swept them from its surface like so many dry leaves, had it not been for the momentary precautions which they had taken for their safety. But as the wind rushed down the glen, it completely removed for the space of three or four minutes the veil of mist which former gusts had only served to agitate or discompose, and showed them the nature and cause of the interruption which they had met with so unexpectedly.

The rapid but correct eye of Arthur was then able to ascertain that the path, after leaving the platform of rock on which they stood, had originally passed upwards in the same direction along the edge of a steep bank of earth, which had then formed the upper covering of a stratum of precipitous rocks. But it had chanced, in some of the convulsions of nature which take place in those wild regions, where she works upon a scale so formidable, that the earth had made a slip, or almost a precipitous descent, from the rock, and been hurled downwards with the path, which was traced along the top, and with bushes, trees, or whatever grew upon it, into the channel of the stream; for such they could now discern the water beneath them to be, and not a lake or an arm of a lake, as they had hitherto supposed.

The immediate cause of this phenomenon might probably have been an earthquake, not unfrequent in that country. The bank of earth, now a confused mass of ruins inverted in its fall, showed some trees growing in a horizontal position,

and others, which, having pitched on their heads in their descent, were at once inverted and shattered to pieces, and lay a sport to the streams of the river which they had heretofore covered with gloomy shadow. The gaunt precipice which remained behind, like the skeleton of some huge monster divested of its flesh, formed the wall of a fearful abyss, resembling the face of a newly wrought quarry, more dismal of aspect from the rawness of its recent formation, and from its being as yet uncovered with any of the vegetation with which nature speedily mantles over the bare surface even of her sternest crags and precipices.

Besides remarking these appearances, which tended to show that this interruption of the road had been of recent occurrence, Arthur was able to observe, on the further side of the river, higher up the valley, and rising out of the pine forest, interspersed with rocks, a square building of considerable height, like the ruins of a Gothic tower. He pointed out this remarkable object to Antonio, and demanded if he knew it; justly conjecturing that, from the peculiarity of the sight, it was a landmark not easily to be forgotten by any who had seen it before. Accordingly, it was gladly and promptly recognised by the lad, who called cheerfully out, that the place was Geierstein, that is, as he explained it, the Rock of the Vultures. He knew it, he said, by the old tower, as well as by a huge pinnacle of rock which arose near it, almost in the form of a steeple, to the top of which the *Lammergeier* (one of the largest birds of prey known to exist) had in former days transported the child of an ancient lord of the castle. He proceeded to recount the vow which was made by the knight of Geierstein to Our Lady of Einsiedlen; and, while he spoke, the castle, rocks, woods, and precipices, again faded in mist. But as he concluded his wonderful narrative with the miracle which restored the infant again to its father's arms, he cried out suddenly, "Look to yourselves—the storm!—the storm!" It came accordingly, and sweeping the mist before it, again bestowed on the travellers

a view of the horrors around them. "Ay!" quoth Antonio triumphantly, as the gust abated, "old Pontius loves little to hear of Our Lady of Einsiedlen; but she will keep her own with him—Ave Maria!"

". . . But how we are to get to the Vulture's Castle, unless we had wings like the Vulture, is a question hard to answer."

From "Anne of Geierstein"

IMPRESSIONS OF MONT BLANC

P. B. Shelley

FAR, far above, piercing the infinite sky,
Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread
And wind among the accumulated steeps;
A desert peopled by the storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously
Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high,
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-daemon taught her young
Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea
Of fire envelope once this silent snow?
None can reply—all seems eternal now.
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
So solemn, so serene, that man may be
But for such faith with nature reconciled;
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
Within the daedal earth; lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower;—the bound
With which from that detested trance they leap;
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
And that of him and all that his may be;
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell.
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
Remote, serene, and inaccessible:
And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
On which I gaze, even these primaeval mountains
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice,
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil;
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race
Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,

And their place is not known. Below, vast caves
Shine in the rushing torrent's restless gleam,
Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling
Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:—the power is there,
The still and solemn power of many sights,
And many sounds, and much of life and death.
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them:—Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
Over the snow. The secret Strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
And what wert thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?

From "Mont Blanc"

THE GREAT VESUVIUS

Lord Lytton

I. Vesuvius the Deliverer

Alone, and in the power of this singular and fearful man, Ione was not yet terrified; in her own purity she felt protection.

"*I love another!*" said Ione, blushingly, but in a firm voice.

Arbaces came nearer to her—his breath glowed fiercely on her cheek; he wound his arms round her—she sprang from his embrace.

"Then hear me," said Arbaces, sinking his voice into a whisper; "thou shalt go to thy tomb rather than to his arms!"

At that instant the curtain was rudely torn aside, the Egyptian felt a fierce and strong grasp upon his shoulder. He turned—he beheld before him the flashing eyes of Glaucus, and the pale, worn, but menacing countenance of Apæcides. "Ah!" he muttered, as he glared from one to the other, "what Fury hath sent ye hither?"

"Até," answered Glaucus; and he closed at once with the Egyptian. Meanwhile, Apæcides raised his sister, now lifeless, from the ground; his strength, exhausted by a mind long overwrought, did not suffice to bear her away, light and delicate though her shape: he placed her, therefore, on the couch, and stood over her with a brandishing knife, watching the contest between Glaucus and the Egyptian, and ready to plunge his weapon in the bosom of Arbaces, should he be victorious in the struggle. There is, perhaps, nothing on earth so terrible as the naked and unarmed contest of animal strength, no weapon but those which Nature supplies to rage. Both the antagonists were now locked in each other's grasp—the hand of each seeking the throat of the other—the face drawn back—the fierce eyes flashing—the muscles strained—the veins swelled—the lips apart—the teeth set;—both were strong beyond the ordinary power of men, both animated by relentless wrath;—they uttered cries of ire and revenge;—they were now before the altar—now at the base of the column where the struggle had commenced.

"O ancient goddess!" exclaimed Arbaces, clasping the column, and raising his eyes towards the sacred image it supported, "protect thy chosen,—proclaim thy vengeance against this thing of an upstart creed, who with sacrilegious violence profanes thy resting-place and assails thy servant."

As he spoke, the still and vast features of the goddess seemed suddenly to glow with life; through the black marble, as through a transparent veil, flushed luminously a crimson and burning hue; around the head played and darted coruscations of livid lightning; the eyes became like balls of lurid fire, and seemed fixed in withering and intolerable wrath upon the countenance of the Greek. Awed and appalled by this sudden and mystic answer to the prayer of his foe, and not free from the hereditary superstition of his race, the cheeks of Glaucus paled before that strange and ghastly animation of the marble,—his knees knocked together,—he stood, seized with a divine panic, dismayed, aghast, half unmanned before his foe! Arbaces gave him not breathing time to recover his stupor: "Die, wretch!" he shouted, in a voice of thunder, as he sprang upon the Greek; "the Mighty Mother claims thee as a living sacrifice!" Taken thus by surprise in the first consternation of his superstitious fears, the Greek lost his footing—the marble floor was as smooth as glass—he slid—he fell. Arbaces planted his foot on the breast of his fallen foe. Apæcides, taught by his sacred profession, as well as by his knowledge of Arbaces, to distrust all miraculous interpositions, had not shared the dismay of his companion; he rushed forward, his knife gleamed in the air,—the watchful Egyptian caught his arm as it descended,—one wrench of his powerful hand tore the weapon from the weak grasp of the priest,—one sweeping blow stretched him to the earth—with a loud and exulting yell Arbaces brandished the knife on high. Glaucus gazed upon his impending fate with unwinking eyes, and in the stern and scornful resignation of a fallen gladiator, when, at that awful instant, the floor shook under them with a rapid and convulsive throe—a mightier spirit than that of the Egyptian was abroad!—a giant and crushing power, before which sunk into sudden impotence his passion and his arts. It woke—it stirred—that dread Demon of the Earthquake—laughing to scorn alike the magic of human guile and the malice of human wrath. As a Titan, on whom the mountains

are piled, it roused itself from the sleep of years,—it moved on its tortured couch,—the caverns below groaned and trembled beneath the motion of its limbs. In the moment of his vengeance and his power, the self-prized demigod was humbled to his real clay. Far and wide along the soil went a hoarse and rumbling sound,—the curtains of the chamber shook as at the blast of a storm,—the altar rocked—the tripod reeled, —and, high over the place of contest, the column trembled and waved from side to side,—the sable head of the goddess tottered and fell from its pedestal;—as the Egyptian stooped above his intended victim, right upon his bended form, right between the shoulder and the neck, struck the marble mass! the shock stretched him like the blow of death, at once, suddenly, without sound or motion, or semblance of life, upon the floor, apparently crushed by the very divinity he had impiously animated and invoked!

"The Earth has preserved her children," said Glaucus, staggering to his feet. "Blessed be the dread convulsion! Let us worship the providence of the gods!" He assisted Apæcides to rise, and then turned upward the face of Arbaces; it seemed locked as in death; blood gushed from the Egyptian's lips over his glittering robes; he fell heavily from the arms of Glaucus, and the red stream trickled slowly along the marble. Again the earth shook beneath their feet; they were forced to cling to each other; the convulsion ceased as suddenly as it came: they tarried no longer; Glaucus bore Ione lightly in his arms, and they fled from the unhallowed spot. But scarce had they entered the garden when they were met on all sides by flying and disordered groups of women and slaves, whose festive and glittering garments contrasted in mockery the solemn terror of the hour; they did not appear to heed the strangers,—they were occupied only with their own fears. After the tranquillity of sixteen years, that burning and treacherous soil again menaced destruction; they uttered but one cry, "THE EARTHQUAKE! THE EARTHQUAKE!"

II. The Witch of Vesuvius

Our lovers stopped in perplexity and doubt, when suddenly, as the darkness that gloomed between the fierce flashes of lightning once more wrapped them round, they saw near, but high, before them, the mysterious light. They resolved to ascend towards it. At length they stood opposite the mouth of a kind of cavern, apparently formed by huge splinters of rock that had fallen transversely athwart each other: and, looking into the gloom, each drew back involuntarily with a superstitious fear and chill.

A fire burned in the far recess of the cave; and over it was a small cauldron; on a tall and thin column of iron stood a rude lamp; over that part of the wall, at the base of which burned the fire, hung in many rows, as if to dry, a profusion of herbs and weeds. A fox, crouched before the fire, gazed upon the strangers with its bright and red eye—its hair bristling—and a low growl stealing from between its teeth; in the centre of the cave was an earthen statue, which had three heads of a singular and fantastic cast: they were formed by the real skulls of a dog, a horse, and a boar; a low tripod stood before this wild representation of the popular Hecate.

Before the fire, with the light shining full upon her features, sat a woman of considerable age. Perhaps in no country does beauty so awfully change, in age, to hideousness the most appalling and revolting. But the old woman now before them was not one of these specimens of the extreme of human ugliness; on the contrary, her countenance betrayed the remains of a regular but high and aquiline order of feature: with stony eyes turned upon them—with a look that met and fascinated theirs—they beheld in that fearful countenance the very image of a corpse!—the same, the glazed and lustreless regard, the blue and shrunken lips, the drawn and hollow jaw—the dead, lank hair, of a pale grey—the livid, green, ghastly skin, which seemed all surely tinged and tainted by the grave!

"Who are ye?" said a hollow and ghostly voice. "And what do ye here?"

The sound, terrible and deathlike as it was—suiting well the countenance of the speaker, and seeming rather the voice of some bodiless wanderer of the Styx than living mortal, would have made Ione shrink back into the pitiless fury of the storm, but Glaucus, though not without some misgiving, drew her into the cavern.

"We are storm-beaten wanderers from the neighbouring city," said he, "and decoyed hither by yon light; we crave shelter and the comfort of your hearth."

"Come to the fire if ye will!" said she. "I never welcome living thing—save the owl, the fox, the toad and the viper—so I cannot welcome ye; but come to the fire without welcome—why stand upon form?"

"Hast thou dwelt here long?" said Glaucus, after a pause.

"Ah, long!—yes."

"It is but a drear abode."

"Ha! thou mayest well say that—Hell is beneath us!" replied the hag, pointing her bony finger to the earth. "And I will tell thee a secret—the dim things below are preparing wrath for ye above—you, the young, and the thoughtless, and the beautiful."

"Thou utterest but evil words, ill-becoming the hospitable," said Glaucus; "and in future I will brave the tempest rather than thy welcome."

"Thou wilt do well. None should ever seek me—save the wretched!"

"And why the wretched?" asked the Athenian.

"I am the witch of the mountain," replied the sorceress, with a ghastly grin; "my trade is to give hope to the hopeless: for the crossed in love I have philtres; for the avaricious, promises of treasure; for the malicious, potions of revenge; for the happy and the good, I have only what life has—curses! Trouble me no more."

[Dismayed and awed by the curse of the witch, Glaucus

and Ione go forth from the cave. The witch intrigues with Arbaces to defeat Glaucus. Apæcides is murdered by Arbaces, but the guilt is laid upon Glaucus, who is imprisoned and ordered to face the fury of the lions in the amphitheatre on the morrow.]

III. Vesuvius Awakening

The awful night preceding the fierce joy of the amphitheatre rolled drearily away, and gaily broke forth the dawn of THE LAST DAY OF POMPEII! The air was uncommonly calm and sultry —a thin and dull mist gathered over the valleys and hollows of the broad Campanian fields. But yet it was remarked with surprise by the early fishermen, that, despite the exceeding stillness of the atmosphere, the waves of the sea were agitated, and seemed, as it were, to run disturbedly back from the shore; while along the blue and stately Sarnus, whose ancient breadth of channel the traveller now vainly seeks to discover, there crept a hoarse and sullen murmur, as it glided by the laughing plains and the gaudy villas of the wealthy citizens. Clear above the low mist rose the time-worn towers of the immemorial town, the red-tiled roofs of the bright streets, the solemn columns of many temples, and the statue-crowned portals of the Forum and the Arch of Triumph. Far in the distance, the outline of the circling hills soared above the vapours, and mingled with the changeful hues of the morning sky. The cloud that had so long rested over the crest of Vesuvius had suddenly vanished, and its rugged and haughty brow looked without a frown over the beautiful scenes below.

Despite the earliness of the hour, the gates of the city were already opened. Horseman upon horseman, vehicle after vehicle, poured rapidly in; and the voices of numerous pedestrian groups, clad in holiday attire, rose high in joyous and excited merriment; the streets were crowded with citizens and strangers from the populous neighbourhood of Pompeii; and noisily—fast—confusedly swept the many streams of life towards the fatal show.

While the common people, with the lively vehemence of the Campanian blood, were thus pushing, scrambling, hurrying on, a strange visitor to Arbaces was threading her way to his sequestered mansion. At the sight of her quaint and primeval garb—of her wild gait and gestures—the passengers she encountered touched each other and smiled; but as they caught a glimpse of her countenance, the mirth was hushed at once, for the face was as the face of the dead; and, what with the ghastly features and obsolete robes of the stranger, it seemed as if one long entombed had risen once more amongst the living. In silence and awe each group gave way as she passed along, and she soon gained the broad porch of the Egyptian's palace.

[Arbaces had had strange and unquiet dreams, and as he woke in terror his eyes fell upon "the ghastly features, the lifeless eye, the livid lip—of the Hag of Vesuvius!"]

"Woman, how camest thou here, and wherefore?"

"I came to warn thee," answered the sepulchral voice of the saga. "Listen to me. Some evil hangs over this fated city. Fly while it be time. Thou knowest that I hold my home on that mountain beneath which old tradition saith there yet burn the fires of the river of Phlegethon; and in my cavern is a vast abyss, and in that abyss I have of late marked a red and dull stream creep slowly, slowly on; and heard many and mighty sounds hissing and roaring through the gloom. But last night, as I looked thereon, behold the stream was no longer dull, but intensely and fiercely luminous; and while I gazed, the beast that liveth with me, and was cowering by my side, uttered a shrill howl, and fell down and died, and the slaver and froth were round his lips. I crept back to my lair; but I distinctly heard, all the night, the rock shake and tremble; and, though the air was heavy and still, there were the hissing of pent winds, and the grinding as of wheels beneath the ground. So, when I rose this morning at the very birth of dawn, I looked again down the abyss, and I saw vast fragments of stone borne black and floatingly over

the lurid stream; and the stream itself was broader, fiercer, redder than the night before. Then I went forth and ascended to the summit of the rock; and in that summit there appeared a sudden and vast hollow, which I had never perceived before, from which curled a dim, faint smoke; and the vapour was deathly, and I gasped, and sickened, and nearly died. I returned home, I took my gold and my drugs, and left the habitation of many years; for I remembered the dark Etruscan prophecy which saith, 'When the mountain opens, the city shall fall—when the smoke crowns the Hills of the Parched Fields, there shall be woe and weeping in the hearths of the Children of the Sea.' Dread master, ere I leave these walls for some more distant dwelling, I come to thee. As thou livest, know I in my heart that the earthquake that sixteen years ago shook this city to its solid base was but the forerunner of more deadly doom. The walls of Pompeii are built above the fields of the Dead, and the rivers of the sleepless Hell. Be warned and fly!

"This may be the last time we meet on earth; but whither flieth the flame when it leaves the ashes?—Wandering to and fro, up and down, as an exhalation on the morass, the flame may be seen in the marshes of the lake below; and the witch and the Magian, the pupil and the master, the great one and the accursed one, may meet again. Farewell!"

IV. Vesuvius the Destroyer

It was the custom to attend the ceremonials of the amphitheatre in festive robes, and Arbaces arrayed himself that day with more than usual care. His tunic was of the most dazzling white; his many fibulæ were formed from the most precious stones; over his tunic flowed a loose eastern robe, half-gown, half-mantle, glowing in the richest hues of the Tyrian dye; and the sandals, that reached half-way up the knee, were studded with gems, and inlaid with gold. In the quackeries that belonged to his priestly genius, Arbaces never

neglected, on great occasions, the arts which dazzle and impose upon the vulgar; and on this day, that was for ever to release him, by the sacrifice of Glaucus, from the fear of a rival and the chance of detection, he felt that he was arraying himself as for a triumph or a nuptial feast.

With a loud and warlike flourish of trumpets, the gladiators, marshalled in ceremonious procession, entered the arena. They swept round the oval space very slowly and deliberately, in order to give the spectators full leisure to admire their stern serenity of feature—their brawny limbs and various arms, as well as to form such wagers as the excitement of the moment might suggest.

[After many contests the time came for Glaucus to enter the arena.]

A deep and breathless hush of overwrought interest and intense yet, strange to say, not unpleasing terror lay, like a mighty and awful dream, over the assembly.

"Glaucus the Athenian, thy time has come," said a loud and clear voice; "the lion awaits thee."

When the Greek saw the eyes of thousands and tens of thousands upon him, he no longer felt that he was mortal. All evidence of fear—all fear itself—was gone. A red and haughty flush spread over the paleness of his features—he towered aloft to the full of his glorious stature.

The editor's lip quivered, and his cheek grew pale; he looked anxiously around—hesitated—delayed; the crowd became impatient. Slowly he gave the sign; the keeper, who was behind the den, cautiously removed the grating, and the lion leaped forth with a mighty and glad roar of release.

Glaucus had bent his limbs so as to give himself the firmest posture at the expected rush of the lion, with his small and shining weapon raised on high, in the faint hope that *one* well-directed thrust (for he knew that he should have time but for *one*) might penetrate through the eye to the brain of his grim foe. But, to the unutterable astonishment of all, the beast seemed not even aware of the presence of the criminal.

At the first moment of its release it halted abruptly in the arena, raised itself half on end, snuffing the upward air with impatient sighs; then suddenly it sprang forward, but not on the Athenian. At half-speed it circled round and round the space. At length, as if tired of attempting to escape, it crept with a moan into its cage.

A loud cry was heard at one of the entrances of the arena; there was confusion, a bustle, the crowd gave way, and suddenly Sallust appeared on the senatorial benches, his hair dishevelled—breathless—heated—half-exhausted. He cast his eyes hastily round the ring. "Remove the Athenian!" he cried; "haste—he is innocent! Arrest Arbaces the Egyptian—HE is the murderer of Apæcides!"

"*To the lion with the Egyptian!*"

With that cry up sprang—on moved—thousands upon thousands! They rushed from the heights—they poured down in the direction of the Egyptian. The people had been already rendered savage by the exhibition of blood—they thirsted for more—the waves of the human sea halted for a moment, to enable Arbaces to count the exact moment of his doom! In despair, and in a terror which beat down even pride, he glanced his eyes over the rolling and rushing crowd—when, right above them, through the wide chasm which had been left in the velaria, he beheld a strange and awful apparition—he beheld—and his craft restored his courage!

He stretched his hand on high; over his lofty brow and royal features there came an expression of unutterable solemnity and command.

"Behold!" he shouted with a voice of thunder, which stilled the roar of the crowd; "behold how the gods protect the guiltless! The fires of the avenging Orcus burst forth against the false witness of my accusers!"

The eyes of the crowd followed the gesture of the Egyptian, and beheld, with ineffable dismay, a vast vapour shooting from the summit of Vesuvius, in the form of a gigantic pine-tree; the trunk, blackness—the branches, fire!—a fire that

shifted and wavered in its hues with every moment, now fiercely luminous, now of a dull and dying red, that again blazed terrifically forth with intolerable glare!

There was a dead, heart-sunken silence—through which there suddenly broke the roar of the lion, which was echoed back from within the building by the sharper and fiercer yells of its fellow-beast. Dread seers were they of the Burden of the Atmosphere, and wild prophets of the wrath to come!

Then there arose on high the universal shrieks of women; the men stared at each other, but were dumb. At that moment they felt the earth shake beneath their feet; the walls of the theatre trembled; and beyond, in the distance, they heard the crashing of falling roofs; an instant more and the mountain-cloud seemed to roll towards them, dark and rapid, like a torrent; at the same time, it cast forth from its bosom a shower of ashes, mixed with the vast fragments of burning stone! Over the crushing vines,—over the desolate streets,—over the amphitheatre itself,—far and wide,—with many a mighty splash in the agitated sea,—fell that awful shower!

No longer thought the crowd of justice or of Arbaces; safety for themselves was their sole thought. Each turned to fly—each dashing, pressing, crushing, against the other. Tramping recklessly over the fallen—amidst groans, and oaths, and prayers, and sudden shrieks, the enormous crowd vomited itself forth through the numerous passages. Whither should they fly? Some, anticipating a second earthquake, hastened to their homes to load themselves with their more costly goods, and escape while it was yet time; others, dreading the showers of ashes that now fell fast, torrent upon torrent, over the streets, rushed under the roofs of the nearest houses, or temples, or sheds—shelter of any kind—for protection from the terrors of the open air. But darker, and larger, and mightier, spread the cloud above them. It was a sudden and more ghastly Night rushing upon the realm of Noon!

V. Vesuvius the Avenger

Advancing, as men grope for escape in a dungeon, Ione and her lover continued their uncertain way. At the moments when the volcanic lightnings lingered over the streets, they were enabled, by that awful light, to steer and guide their progress: yet, little did the view it presented to them cheer or encourage their path. In parts where the ashes lay dry and uncommixed with the boiling torrents cast upwards from the mountain at capricious intervals, the surface of the earth presented a leprous and ghastly white. In other places, cinder and rock lay matted in heaps, from beneath which emerged the half-hid limbs of some crushed and mangled fugitive. The groans of the dying were broken by the wild shrieks of women's terror—now near, now distant—which, when heard in the utter darkness, were rendered doubly appalling by the crushing sense of helplessness and the uncertainty of the perils around; and clear and distinct through all were the mighty and various noises from the Fatal Mountain; its rushing winds; its whirling torrents; and, from time to time, the burst and roar of some more fiery and fierce explosion. And ever as the winds swept howling along the street, they bore sharp streams of burning dust, and such sickening and poisonous vapours as took away, for the instant, breath and consciousness, followed by a rapid revulsion of the arrested blood, and a tingling sensation of agony trembling through every nerve and fibre of the frame.

[As Glaucus and Ione stumbled forward they came upon a group of torch-bearers, and, to their horror, saw in front of them the lofty form of Arbaces.]

"Traitor and murderer!" cried Glaucus, glaring upon his foe, "Nemesis hath guided thee to my revenge!—a just sacrifice to the shades of Hades, that now seem loosed on earth. Approach—touch but the hand of Ione, and thy weapon shall be as a reed. I will tear thee limb from limb!"

Suddenly, as he spoke, the place became lighted with an

intense and lurid glow. Bright and gigantic through the darkness, which closed around it like the walls of hell, the mountain shone—a pile of fire! Its summit seemed riven in two; or rather, above its surface there seemed to rise two monster shapes, each confronting each, as Demons contending for a World. These were of one deep blood-red hue of fire, which lighted up the whole atmosphere far and wide; but *below*, the nether part of the mountain was still dark and shrouded, save in three places, adown which flowed, serpentine and irregular, rivers of the molten lava. Darkly red through the profound gloom of their banks, they flowed slowly on as towards the devoted city. Over the broadest there seemed to spring a cragged and stupendous arch, from which, as from the jaws of hell, gushed the sources of the sudden Phlegethon. And through the stilled air was heard the rattling of the fragments of rock, hurtling one upon another as they were borne down the fiery cataracts—darkening, for one instant, the spot where they fell, and suffused the next, in the burnished hues of the flood along which they floated!

The Egyptian himself stood transfixed to the spot, the glow lighting up his commanding features and jewelled robes. High behind him rose a tall column that supported the bronze statue of Augustus; and the imperial image seemed changed to a shape of fire!

Arbaces turned his eyes from the mountain.

He advanced one step—it was his last on earth! The ground shook beneath him with a convulsion that cast all around upon its surface. A simultaneous crash resounded through the city, as down toppled many a roof and pillar!—the lightning, as if caught by the metal, lingered an instant on the Imperial Statue—then shivered bronze and column! Down fell the ruin, echoing along the street, and riving the solid pavement where it crashed!—The prophecy of the stars was fulfilled!

The sound—the shock, stunned the Athenian for several

moments. When he recovered, the light still illumined the scene—the earth still slid and trembled beneath! Ione lay senseless on the ground, but he saw her not yet—his eyes were fixed upon a ghastly face that seemed to emerge, without limbs or trunk, from the huge fragments of the shattered column—a face of unutterable pain, agony, and despair! The eyes shut and opened rapidly, as if sense were not yet fled; the lips quivered and grinned—then sudden stillness and darkness fell over the features, yet retaining that aspect of horror never to be forgotten!

So perished the wise Magician—the great Arbaces—the Hermes of the Burning Belt—the last of the royalty of Egypt!

From "The Last Days of Pompeii" (abridged)

THE SIMPLON TUNNEL

Clarence Rook

THE surmounting of the passes is thrown into the shade by the tunnelling of the mountains. The Simplon Tunnel is the latest expression of Swiss engineering.

At 7 A.M. on February 24, 1905, came the dramatic meeting of the men of Switzerland with the men of Italy, who with bore and drill, with pick and shovel, had for six and a half years been burrowing beneath the mountains towards a meeting place. It is said to have been the "most splendidly arranged work of the kind that has ever been done." Throughout the whole period the measurements originally laid down varied but by an inch or so.

There were many difficulties—the great length—12½ miles—in some places the soft and treacherous rocks—the height of the mountains (5000–7000 feet above the tunnel) produced problems of ventilation and temperature, for this was the greatest depth at which men have ever been below ground. Complications came in the way of hot springs.

The work was begun on August 6, 1898. From both ends the tunnel rises towards the middle in order that any water from the springs encountered might flow away by gravitation.

At a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Iselle a great subterranean river was met with in September 1901, which caused serious delay, and for a period of six months the total advance was only 46 metres. The difficulties at this point were such as in the hands of men of less determination might have resulted in the abandonment of the undertaking. Not only was it necessary to close-timber the gallery on both sides, and also at the top and floor, with the heaviest baulks of square pitch pine 20 inches thick, but when these were crushed into splinters and the gallery completely blocked with their wreckage, steel girders were adopted, only in their turn to be distorted and bent out of shape. It seemed as if no available material could be found which would stand the enormous pressure of the rocks, until steel girders, forming a square placed side by side (the interstices being filled with cement concrete) resisted the load. Fortunately this 'bad ground' only extended for a distance of about 50 yards, but it cost nearly £1000 per yard to overcome this difficulty, and required the encasement of the tunnel at this point on sides, floor, and arch with granite masonry, 8 feet 6 inches in thickness.

Meanwhile the progress at the Brigue side was good, and the miners reached the half-way boundary and then began to encounter great heat from both rock and springs. It was a curious experience to insert one's arm into a bore-hole in the rock and to find it so hot as to be unbearable; the maximum heat they encountered was 131° F. But now a fresh difficulty presented itself, as in order to save time it was desirable to commence driving *down*hill to meet the miners coming uphill from Italy, and thus the very problem which the ascending gradients had been provided to avoid had to be faced. As the gallery descended the hot springs followed, and

the boring machines and the miners were standing in a sea of hot water; this for a time was pumped out by centrifugal pumps over the apex of the tunnel, but at last, and while there still remained some 300 or 400 yards to be penetrated, it was found impossible to continue going downhill.

Nevertheless time had to be saved, and as the height of the heading was only some 7 feet while that of the finished tunnel was 21 feet, it was decided to continue to drive the gallery forward, on a slightly rising gradient, until it reached the top of the future tunnel. After 702 feet had thus been driven, the hot springs proved so copious that work had to cease, and an iron door, which had been fixed in the heading some 200 or 300 yards back, was finally closed, and the gallery *filled* with hot water. Advance now could only be made from the Italian 'face,' but even there the difficulties from hot water were very great, so much so that for a time one of the galleries had to be abandoned and access obtained to it by driving the parallel gallery ahead and then returning and taking the hot springs in the rear. The only way in which these hot springs, sometimes as high as 125° F. could be grappled with was by throwing jets of cold water under high pressure into the fissures, and thus diluting them down to a temperature which the miners could stand.

At the right moment, at 7 A.M. on February 24, 1905, a heavy charge was exploded in the *roof* of the Italian heading, which blew a hole into the *floor* of the Swiss gallery and released the impounded hot water.

On April 2, 1905, the visitors and officials from the Italian side, travelling in a miner's train, arrived within 250 yards of the *Porte de fer*, in the middle of the mountain, six miles or more from either entrance, and completed their journey on foot up to that point. Meanwhile the officials and visitors from the Swiss entrance had travelled up to the other side of the door. At the right moment this was opened by Colonel Locher-Freuler, and the two parties met and fraternised, embracing one another. A religious dedication

service, conducted by the Bishop of Sion, was then held on the spot, and the Divine blessing was invoked on the tunnel, the officials, the workmen, and the trains, and touching reference was made to those who had lost their lives in the execution of this great work—some forty or fifty in number. Thus was the *Fête de Percement* of the greatest tunnel in the world celebrated, and it was felt that the service was an appropriate recognition of the injunction, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

From "Switzerland and her People"

BALMAT'S FROZEN HANDS

Alfred Wills

[The expedition here described was undertaken to test the behaviour of thermometers at different heights on Mont Blanc. The thermometers were sunk about 4 feet below the surface, and would thus record to what degree the cold penetrated.

It is worthy of note that Balmat refused any recognition of his services from the Royal Society, though at its meeting in Leeds great applause rang through the hall as Alfred Wills told the members of Balmat's devotion to the cause of science. With his own hands he had hollowed out the places for the thermometers.]

At last when we had endured for nearly a whole hour the combined attack of wind and mist and snowdrift I began to get uneasy as to consequences. My hands and feet were almost without feeling, and one of Dr Tyndall's feet was quite senseless. . . . Our men looked like animated corpses; the livid hue of their faces had deepened almost into black; they were shrivelled and shrunk. . . . Balmat I thought looked particularly ill; but, with indefatigable zeal, he was still busy trampling down the snow into the hole where the thermometer now lay nearly four feet below the surface. The iron bar was sunk seven feet deep, leaving about three feet above the ice to guide those who might seek it the next

autumn to the spot. . . . We gathered our traps together with all the haste we could, and in two minutes were out of sight of the summit, hurrying down the trackless waste of ice which forms the Calotte.

We could not see thirty yards before us, but, guided by the unerring sagacity of Balmat, we had no fear of losing the direction even in that dreary mist. We had not gone many hundred yards, however, before Balmat turned to me and said, "I feel a *something*. I think I shall look at my hands." And pulling off his gloves he found, to our horror, that, from the ends of the fingers to knuckles they were perfectly black. He said quietly, "There is no time to lose"; and, casting down his traps, began to rub his hands violently with the snow; then, as no trace of sensation appeared, he began to get alarmed, and begged us to beat his hands. "*Frappez*," he said, "*frappez fortement; n'ayez pas peur; fortement, fortement!*" So Dr Tyndall took one hand, and I the other; and taking off our thick, fingerless gloves, used them to beat the black and senseless hands with all our might. In that thin atmosphere any exertion is severely felt, and at length I actually fell back upon the snow exhausted with the work, and was obliged to call upon one of our porters, all of whom seemed quite stupefied at the catastrophe, to relieve me. Then we rubbed him with brandy and gave him some rich cordial—a sort of liqueur that Dr Tyndall had in his flask. All the while we were standing in the driving mist and pitiless wind, not a quarter of a mile from the summit of Mont Blanc.

At last, after about half an hour's incessant and violent labour, sensation began to return. I have witnessed some forms of acute suffering in my time, but such an exhibition of human agony I have never beheld, and I devoutly trust I never may again. He was at times quite unable to speak, and kept rubbing his hands in the snow and stamping about in a kind of frantic way, his quivering lips, bent brow, and dilated nostrils alone visible beneath the mask, and telling us what he was suffering. Then he would exclaim passionately,

"*Hélas! je souffre, je souffre.*" Then he would turn to us; and, with that generous devotion to others which marks a noble character, implore us not to expose ourselves on his account, and give us some directions as to the route. The painful excitement of the scene may be more easily imagined than described, and it was increased by our utter inability to do anything to help him. Every now and then he bit one or other of his fingers; and finding that, notwithstanding the torture which the rest caused him, these were still senseless, set to work again with redoubled vehemence to rub and beat the hand.

No less than three-quarters of an hour were spent in this dreadful way, when he said it was not safe for us to stay longer and we must move on.

It was touching to observe the eager anxiety of the young men (porters) to spare Balmat every sort of fatigue or trouble. From the Grands Mulets a great deal of baggage had to be carried, and our porters were over-weighted, but not one ounce would they let Balmat carry. . . .

Poor Balmat's hands continued very painful all the way home. The back of each hand was swollen to a height of nearly an inch above the natural level, from the severe beating which had been administered. It was many weeks before they were entirely cured, and eventually several of the nails came off.

From "The Eagle's Nest"

THE MOUNTAIN'S SECRET

Samuel Butler

WHEN I came to the main range, Chowbok's[1] manner changed at once. He became uneasy, and began to prevaricate and shuffle. In a few minutes I could see that of this too there existed traditions in the tribe; but no efforts or coaxing could get a word out of him about them. . . .

[1] Chowbok was a kind of chief of the natives.

One day during the time of shearing Chowbok was in the wool-shed, and though for two hours he tried to put me off with lies, I was determined to learn the mountain's secret: and at length I became sure that he would give in ultimately, and that with a little further patience I should get his story out of him.

On a sudden, without a word of warning, he rolled two bales of wool (his strength was very great) into the middle of the floor, and on top of these he placed another crosswise. He snatched up an empty wool pack, threw it like a mantle over his shoulders, jumped upon the uppermost bale, and sat upon it. In a moment his whole form was changed. His high shoulders dropped; he set his feet close together, heel to heel and toe to toe; he laid his arms and hands close alongside of his body, the palms following his thighs, he held his head high but quite straight, and his eyes stared right in front of him; but he frowned horribly, and assumed an expression of face that was positively fiendish. At the best of times Chowbok was very ugly, but he now exceeded all conceivable limits of the hideous. His mouth extended almost from ear to ear, his teeth grinning horribly; his eyes glared, though they remained quite fixed, and his forehead was contracted with a most malevolent scowl. . . .

Then there came from his lips a low moaning like the wind rising and falling, by infinitely small gradation, till it became almost a shriek, from which it descended and died away; after that, he jumped down from the bale, and held up the extended fingers of both his hands, as one who should say "ten," though I did not then understand him.

For myself I was open-mouthed with astonishment. Chowbok rolled the bales rapidly into their place, and stood before me shuddering as in great fear; horror was written upon his face—this time quite involuntarily—as though the natural panic of one who had committed an awful crime against unknown and superhuman agencies. He nodded his head and gibbered, and pointed repeatedly to the mountains.

He would not touch the grog, but after a few seconds, he made a run through the wool-shed door into the moonlight. . . .

I know not what the great snowy ranges might conceal, but they had a meaning that was true and awful to Chowbok. After the shearing was over I took him prospecting tho' I said nothing of my intention to visit the mountains. We spent three weeks exploring and at last one stream remained—after five or six miles I saw a saddle at the end of it—part of the great range itself. My blood felt all on fire with hope and elation; but on looking round for Chowbok, who was behind me, I saw, to my surprise and anger, that he had turned back, and was going down the valley as hard as he could. He had left me.

After much thought I resolved to go forward alone. I would either win for myself the chance of fame and fortune by entering upon this unknown world, or consent to give up life in the attempt. After some time I found myself at the upper end of a chasm in the rocks.

I looked at this rift in great doubt, then I went a little way on either side of it, and found myself looking over the edge of horrible precipices on to the river, which roared some four or five thousand feet below me. I dared not think of getting down at all, unless I committed myself to the rift, of which I was hopeful, when I reflected that the rock was soft, and that the water might have worn its channel tolerably evenly through the whole extent. The darkness was increasing with every minute, but I should have twilight for another half-hour, so I went into the chasm (though by no means without fear), and resolved to return and camp, and try some other path next day, should I come to any serious difficulty. In about five minutes I had completely lost my head; the sides of the rift became hundreds of feet in height, and overhung so that I could not see the sky. It was full of rocks, and I had many falls and bruises. I was wet through from falling into the water, of which there was no great volume, but it

had such force that I could do nothing against it; once I had to leap down a not inconsiderable waterfall into a deep pool below, and my swag was so heavy that I was nearly drowned. I had indeed a hair's-breadth escape; but, as luck would have it, Providence was on my side. Shortly afterwards I began to fancy that the rift was getting wider, and that there was more brushwood. Presently I found myself on an open grassy slope, and feeling my way a little farther along the stream I came upon a flat place with wood, where I could camp comfortably; which was well, for it was now quite dark.

My first care was for my matches; were they dry? The outside of my swag had got completely wet; but, on undoing the blankets, I found things warm and dry within. How thankful I was! I lit a fire and was grateful for its warmth and company. I made myself some tea, and ate two of my biscuits; my brandy I did not touch, for I had little left, and I might want it when my courage failed me. All that I did, I did almost mechanically, for I could not realise my situation to myself, being alone, and knowing that return through the chasm which I had just descended would be almost impossible; and being utterly uncertain about the future. It is a dreadful feeling that of being cut off from all one's kind. I was still full of hope, and built golden castles for myself as soon as I was warmed with food and fire; but I do not believe that any man could long retain his reason in such solitude, unless he had the companionship of animals. One begins doubting one's own identity.

I remember deriving comfort even from the sight of my blankets, and the sound of my watch ticking—things which seemed to link me to other people; but the screaming of the wood-hens frightened me, as also a chattering bird which I had never heard before, and which seemed to laugh at me; though I soon got used to it, and before long could fancy that it was many years since I had first heard it.

I took off my clothes, and wrapped my inside blanket about me, till my things were dry. The night was very still

and I made a roaring fire; so I soon got warm, and at last could put my clothes on again. Then I strapped my blanket round me, and went to sleep as near the fire as I could.

I dreamed that there was an organ placed in my master's wool-shed: the wool-shed faded away, and the organ seemed to grow and grow amid a blaze of brilliant light, till it became a golden city upon the side of a mountain, with rows upon rows of pipes set in cliffs and precipices, one above the other, and in mysterious caverns, like that of Fingal, within whose depths I could see the burnished pillars gleaming.

In front there was a flight of lofty terraces, at the top of which I could see a man with his head buried forwards towards a keyboard, and his body swaying from side to side amid the storm of huge arpeggioed harmonies that came crashing overhead and around. Then there was one who touched me on the shoulder, and said, "Do you not see? It is Handel"; but I had hardly apprehended, and was trying to scale the terraces, and get near him, when I awoke, dazzled with the vividness and distinctness of the dream.

A piece of wood had burned through, and the ends had fallen into the ashes with a blaze: this, I supposed, had both given me my dream and robbed me of it. I was bitterly disappointed, and, sitting up on my elbow, came back to reality and my strange surroundings as best I could.

I was thoroughly aroused—moreover, I felt a foreshadowing as though my attention were arrested by something more than the dream, although no sense in particular was as yet appealed to.

I held my breath and waited, and then I heard—was it fancy? Nay; I listened again and again, and I *did* hear a faint and extremely distant sound of music, like that of an Æolian harp, borne upon the wind, which was blowing fresh and chill from the opposite mountains.

The roots of my hair thrilled. I listened, but the wind had died; and, fancying that it must have been the wind itself—

no; on a sudden I remembered the noise which Chowbok had made in the wool-shed. Yes, it was *that*. . . .

After a slow but steady climb of between three and four hours, during which I met with no serious hindrance, I found myself upon a tableland, and close to a glacier which I recognised as marking the summit of the pass. Above it towered a succession of rugged precipices, and snowy mountain-sides. The solitude was greater than I could bear; my master's sheep-run was a crowded thoroughfare in comparison with this sombre, sullen place. The air, moreover, was dark and heavy, which made the loneliness even more oppressive. There was an inky gloom over all that was not covered with snow and ice. Grass there was none. . . .

I rested for a little while, and then advanced over very rough ground, until I reached the lower end of the glacier. Then I saw another glacier, descending from the eastern side into a small lake. I passed along the western side of the lake, where the ground was easier, and when I had got about half-way, I expected that I should see the plains which I had already seen from the opposite mountains; but it was not to be so, for the clouds rolled up to the very summit of the pass, though they did not overlip it on to the side from which I had come. I therefore soon found myself enshrouded with a cold thin vapour, which prevented my seeing more than a very few yards in front of me. Then I came upon a large patch of old snow, in which I could distinctly trace the half-melted tracks of goats—and in one place, as it seemed to me, there had been a dog following them. Had I lighted upon a land of shepherds? The ground, where not covered with snow, was so poor and stony, and there was so little herbage, that I could see no sign of a path or regular sheep track. But I could not help feeling rather uneasy as I wondered what sort of a reception I might meet with if I were to come suddenly upon inhabitants. I was thinking of this, and proceeding cautiously through the mist, when I began to fancy that I saw some objects darker than the

cloud looming in front of me. A few steps brought me nearer, and a shudder of unutterable horror ran through me, when I saw a circle of gigantic forms, many times higher than myself, upstanding grim and grey through the veil of cloud before me.

I believe I fainted—for how long I shall never know. I was deadly sick and cold when I came to myself. There were the figures, quite still and silent, seen vaguely through the thick gloom, but in human shape indisputably.

A sudden thought occurred to me, which would have doubtless struck me at once had I not been prepossessed with forebodings at the time when I first saw the figures, and had not the cloud concealed them from me—I mean, that they were not living beings, but statues. I determined that I would count fifty slowly, and was sure that the objects were not alive, if during that time I could detect no sign of motion.

How thankful was I when I came to the end of my fifty, and there had been no movement!

I counted a second time—but again all was still.

I then advanced timidly forward, and in another moment I saw that my surmises were correct. I had come upon a sort of Stonehenge of rude and barbaric figures, seated as Chowbok had sat when I questioned him in the wool-shed, and with the same superhumanly malevolent expression upon their faces. They had all been seated, but two had fallen. They were barbarous—neither Egyptian, nor Assyrian, nor Japanese—different from any of these, and yet akin to all.

They were six or seven times larger than life, of great antiquity, worn and lichen grown. They were ten in number. There was snow upon their heads, and wherever snow could lodge. Each statue had been built of four or five enormous blocks, but how these had been raised and put together, is known to those alone who raised them. Each was terrible after a different kind. One was raging furiously, as in pain and great despair; another was lean and cadaverous with famine; another cruel and idiotic, but with the silliest simper

that can be conceived—this one had fallen, and looked exquisitely ludicrous in his fall—the mouths of all were more or less open, and as I looked at them from behind, I saw that their heads had been hollowed.

I was sick and shivering with cold. Solitude had unmanned me already, and I was utterly unfit to have come upon such an assembly of fiends in such a dreadful wilderness and without preparation. I am afraid I cried, and I would certainly have given everything I had in the world to have been back at my master's station; but that was not to be thought of; I felt sure that I should never get back alive.

Then came a gust of howling wind, accompanied with a moan from one of the statues above me. I clasped my hands in fear. I felt like a rat caught in a trap, as though I would have turned and bitten at whatever thing was nearest me.

The wildness of the wind increased, the moans grew shriller, coming from several statues, and swelling into a chorus. I almost immediately knew what it was, but the sound was so unearthly that this was but little consolation. The inhuman beings into whose heart the Evil One had put it to conceive these statues, had made their heads into a sort of organ pipe, so that their mouths should catch the wind and sound with its blowing. It was horrible. However brave a man might be, he could never stand such a concert, from such lips, and in such a place.

I heaped every invective upon them that my tongue could utter, as I rushed away from them into the mist, and even after I had lost sight of them, and, turning my head round, could see nothing but the storm wraiths driving behind me, I heard their ghostly chanting, and felt as though one of them would rush after me, and grip me in his hand, and throttle me.

From "Erewhon"

TARTARIN ON THE ALPS

Alphonse Daudet

FULL of ardour, they resumed their way, plunging up to their knees into the newly fallen snow, which had obliterated all traces of the party's ascent, so Tartarin consulted his compass every moment. But this Tarascon compass, accustomed to a hot climate, had been frozen since its arrival in Switzerland. The needle played puss-in-the-corner, agitated and trembling; so the men proceeded straight before them, expecting to see suddenly the black rocks of the Grands-Mulets, calm amongst the uniform whiteness, amid the peaks, needles, and towers which surrounded them; which dazzled and alarmed them too, for dangerous crevasses might be hidden under their feet.

"Coolness, Gonzague, coolness!"

"That is just what I require," replied Bompard lamentably. Then he groaned; "Oh, my foot—oh, my leg—we are lost: we never shall get home again!"

They walked for two hours towards the middle of a snow-slope very hard to climb. Then Bompard cried, alarmed:

"Tartar*éin*, this ascends!"

"Eh! I can see that very well," replied the President, who seemed disturbed.

"But in my opinion we ought to be going down!"

"*Bé!* yes; but what do you want me to do? If we keep ascending, we may get down the other side!"

That was descending indeed, and terribly, by a succession of *névés*, almost pointed glaciers, and beyond all this dangerous expanse of white, a hut was perceived perched on a rock at a depth that seemed inaccessible. It would be a refuge for the night if they could reach it, as they had lost the direction of the Grands-Mulets—but at the cost of what efforts, what perils, perhaps!

"Whatever you do, don't let me go, Gonzague!"

"Neither you me, Tartarin!"

They exchanged these assurances without seeing each other, being separated by an *arête* behind which Tartarin has disappeared, the one advancing to ascend, the other to descend, slowly and in fear.

They said no more, concentrating all their strength for fear of a false step, or a slip. Suddenly, when he was not more than a yard from the crest, Bompard heard a fearful cry from his companion. At the same time he felt the rope give way with violence, and with an irregular severance. He endeavoured to resist, to fix himself, in order to sustain his companion over the abyss. But the rope was old, no doubt, for at last it snapped suddenly under the strain.

"*Outre!*"

"*Boufre!*"

These two cries arose, wild and despairing, in the silence and the solitude. Then succeeded a terrible calm—the calmness of death, which nothing could trouble more, in the vastness of the immaculate snows!

Towards evening, a man vaguely resembling Bompard—a spectre, dishevelled, wounded, in profuse perspiration—reached the *auberge* of the Grands-Mulets, where they rubbed him, warmed him, and put him to bed ere he could pronounce the words—almost choked with tears, and interrupted by the clenching of his hands towards heaven: "Tartarin—lost—rope broke!" At length they understood the great disaster which had happened.

While the old innkeeper was lamenting, and adding a new chapter to his accidents on the mountain, pending the arrival of new relics, the Swede and his guides, who had returned from their expedition, set out in search of the unfortunate Tartarin, with ropes, ladders, and all the apparatus, alas! without effect. Bompard remained as if stupefied, and was unable to furnish any precise information as to the place where the accident took place. They only found on the Dôme du Goûter an end of rope which remained in a fissure

of the ice. But, curiously enough, this rope was cut as with a sharp instrument, so as to leave two ends. The newspapers of Chambéry gave a facsimile of it. At length, after eight days' searching, conscientiously undertaken, when everyone was convinced that the poor *Présidain* was lost without hope of recovery, the delegates, despairing, returned to Tarascon, carrying Bompard with them—for his skull showed traces of a terrible fall.

"Don't talk to me about it," he would say, whenever the accident was mentioned to him. "Never speak to me on the subject!"

Decidedly, Mont Blanc now reckoned one more victim! And what a victim. . . .

A more impressive place than Tarascon cannot be found under the sun. Sometimes in high *fête*, on Sundays, when all the town is out of doors—the drums beating, the *Cours* festive and noisy, dotted with green and red costumes, and on the great particoloured posters the announcements of the wrestling matches for men and youths, and the bull-rings—it is enough for a practical joker to call out, "Mad dog!" or "Escaped bull!" for the whole population to run indoors, bolt themselves in, the outside Venetian blinds clattering as if in a storm, and lo! there is Tarascon deserted, silent, not a cat visible, not a sound audible, even the grasshoppers themselves are cowering and attentive listeners.

Such was the appearance of Tarascon on this particular morning, when it was neither *fête*-day nor Sunday. The shops were closed, the houses shut up, squares and courts seemingly larger in the solitude. "*Vasta silentio*," said Tacitus, when describing Rome on the occasion of the funeral of Germanicus; and the comparison of Rome in mourning would apply so much better to Tarascon, inasmuch as a funeral service was being performed for the soul of Tartarin at that time in the metropolitan church, where the population *en masse* was weeping for its hero, its divinity, its invincible one with the double muscles, who lay amid the glaciers of Mont Blanc.

Now, while the towering bell was showering its sad notes upon the deserted streets, Mlle Tournatoire, the Doctor's sister, who in consequence of her delicate health always remained indoors, shivering in her great armchair by the window, was looking out as she listened to the bells. The Tournatoire's house was on the Avignon road, almost opposite to Tartarin's house, and the sight of that illustrious domicile, to which the proprietor would never return, the garden gate for ever closed—all, even to the boot-brushing boxes of the two little Savoyards by the door, made the heart of the poor lady swell; a secret passion for the hero having devoured her for more than thirty years! O mysteries of the heart of an old maid! It had been her happiness to see him pass at his regular time, and to say, "Where are you going?" to watch the alterations in his costume, whether he dressed in his Alpine habiliments or in the green coat! Now, she would never see him more! And even the consolation of praying for him with the other ladies of the town was denied to her.

Suddenly the long, white cheeks of Mlle Tournatoire coloured slightly; her pale eyes, rimmed with rose colour, dilated considerably; while her thin hand, with its prominent wrinkles, formed the sign of the cross. He! 'twas he! sidling along the wall at the other side of the street. At first she was under the impression that she had seen an apparition. No, it was Tartarin himself in flesh and blood; only pale, piteous-looking, shabby; sidling along the wall like a poor man or a thief.

But to explain his furtive presence at Tarascon we must return to Mont Blanc, to the Dôme du Goûter, at the precise time when the two friends found themselves one on each side of the Dôme, Bompard feeling the rope which attached him to his friend suddenly stretched, as if by the falling of a body!

In fact, the rope had caught between two masses of ice; and Tartarin, feeling the same shock, also believed that his companion has fallen, and would drag him with him! So, in

that supreme moment—how am I to tell it? *mon Dieu!*—in the agony of fear, both men, forgetting the solemn oath at the Hôtel Baltet, by a simultaneous movement and the same instinctive gesture, cut the rope! Bompard with his hunting-knife, and Tartarin with his ice-axe; then, overwhelmed by their crime, both convinced that they had sacrificed their friend, fled in opposite directions!

When the spectre of Bompard appeared at the Grands-Mulets that of Tartarin reached the canteen of d'Avesailles. How, by what miracle, after so many falls and *glissades*? Mont Blanc alone can tell. . . .

In the conviction which he experienced concerning Bompard, Tartarin, torn by remorse, did not dare to rejoin his delegates nor return home. He anticipated in all eyes, and on every lip: "Cain, where is thy brother?" However, the want of funds, the condition of his wardrobe, the cold of September, which emptied the hotels, compelled him to proceed homewards. After all, no one had seen him commit the crime. Nothing need prevent him from inventing no matter what tale; and, the distractions of the journey assisting, he commenced to pull himself together again. But as he approached Tarascon, when he saw the fine lines of the Alpines standing forth against the blue sky, all the shame, remorse, and fear of being brought to justice seized upon him again; and, to avoid the scandal of an arrival on the railway-station, he quitted the train at the last station before the town was reached.

Ah! on that fine Tarascon road, all white and crackling with dust, without any other shade than the posts and the telegraph-wires, on this triumphal way, where so many times he had marched at the head of his Alpinists or his cap-shooters, who would have recognised him, the valiant, the spruce, under those torn and dirty clothes, with that defiant, restless, gaze watching the *gendarmes*? The day was very warm, though the season was declining, and the water-melon which he purchased from a hawker, and ate in the shade of the cart,

seemed to him delicious, while the peasant declaimed against the want of custom in Tarascon that morning, "because a mass for the dead was being said, for a person found away there in a hole in the mountains! *Té!* the bells were tolling —they could hear them where they stood!"

There was no longer room for doubt: it was for Bompard, who had fallen, that this lugubrious carillon of death was carried by the wind over the lonely surrounding districts.

What an accompaniment to the return of a great man to his native place!

One minute, the door of the little garden was suddenly opened and shut. Tartarin found himself again at home—he saw the narrow paths bordered with trim box edging, and quite tidy; the basin, the fountain, the goldfish darting away as the sand crackled under his feet, and the giant baobab in the flower-pot—a touching appearance of comfort; the warmth of his home as a domestic rabbit enveloped him like a cloak of safety after all his dangers and adventures. But the bells—the cursèd bells—redoubled their clangour, and their deep notes crushed into his heart anew. They kept saying to him in funereal tones: "Cain, where is thy brother? Tartarin, what has thou done with Bompard?" Then, without having courage to move, he seated himself on the sunny edge of the little basin, and remained there exhausted and pensive, to the great disturbance of the gold-fish.

The bells have ceased. The church porch, lately so animated, is given up to the beggar-woman seated there as motionless as the stone saints. The religious ceremony is over, all Tarascon has proceeded to the Alpine Club, where in solemn session Bompard is about to give an account of the catastrophe, and to detail the incidents connected with the last moments of the President. Besides the members, many privileged persons, military, clerical, noble, and mercantile, had taken their places in the conference hall, of which the large open windows permitted the band stationed below on the steps to mingle some heroic chords with the discourses of

these gentlemen. An enormous crowd pressed around the musicians, standing on tiptoe and stretching their necks in the attempt to catch some fragments of the discourse; but the windows were too high up, and they could obtain no impressions as to what was passing within, except from two or three youngsters, perched in a tree hard by, who threw scraps of information as one throws nuts or cherries from the top of a tree.

"*Vé*, Costecalde, who is trying to make himself weep! Ah! the blackguard, he holds the chair at present. And poor Bézuquet, how he blows his nose, how red his eyes are! *Té!* they have put *crépe* on the banner. And Bompard is coming to the table with the three delegates. He puts something on the desk. He speaks now. That must be beautiful! Look how the tears are falling!"

As a matter of fact the tenderness became general as Bompard advanced in his fantastic recital. Ah! memory came back to him again—also imagination! After relating how he and his illustrious companion got to the summit of Mont Blanc, without guides, for all had refused to follow them, being alarmed by the bad weather, and how they alone, with the banner displayed, for five minutes stood upon the highest peak in Europe, he proceeded to recount—and with what emotion—the perilous descent and the fall—Tartarin rolling to the bottom of a crevasse, and he, Bompard, attaching himself to a rope, two hundred feet in length, had explored the hideous chasm throughout its whole length!

"More than twenty times, gentlemen—what do I say?—more than ninety times did I sound that abyss of ice without being able to reach our poor *Présidain*, whose fall, nevertheless, I could trace in consequence of some *débris* left in the crevices of the ice."

As he spoke he laid on the table a fragment of a jaw-bone, some hairs from a beard, a piece of a waistcoat, and a buckle from a pair of braces—one would have declared they came from the relic-cases at the Grands-Mulets!

In face of this testimony, the transports of grief could no longer be restrained; even the hardest hearts, the partisans of Costecalde and the gravest persons—Cambalalette the notary, Doctor Tournatoire—shed, most effectively, some tears as large as decanter stoppers. The ladies present uttered piercing cries, which dominated even the sobbing howls of Excourbaniès and the bleatings of Pascalon, while the funeral march, played by the band, accompanied all with a slow and lugubrious bass.

Then, when he perceived the emotion and distress his peroration has caused, Bompard ended his speech with a fine gesture of pity towards the remains, as conclusive evidence; "There, dear friends and fellow-citizens, is all I could discover of our illustrious and well-beloved President. The remains the glacier will render up to us—in forty years!"

He was about to explain, for the benefit of the ignorant people, the recent discovery of the regular progress of glaciers; but the creaking of the little door at the end interrupted him—someone was coming in. Tartarin, paler than a spirit of Hume's raising, stood before the speaker!

"*Vé!* Tartarin!"

"*Té!* Gonzague!"

And this race is so singular, so *facile,* in the matter of improbable stories, audacious falsehoods, and quick refutations, that the arrival of the great man, whose fragments still lay on the table, did not create any particular astonishment throughout the hall.

"It is a misapprehension, *allons*!" said Tartarin, very much relieved—radiant—with his hand on the shoulder of the man he had believed he had killed. "I did the Mont Blanc on two sides—ascended on one, descended on the other—and this quite accounts for my disappearance." He did not confess that he had passed the second slope on his back!

"*Sacré* Bompard!" said Bézuquet: "he came back to us with his story all the same!" Then they all laughed, and

rubbed their hands, while outside the band, which they in vain attempted to silence, furiously attacked the Funeral March of Tartarin of Tarascon.

From "Tartarin on the Alps"

THE MAGIC OF THE CLOUDS

John Ruskin

STAND upon the peak of some isolated mountain at daybreak, when the night mists first rise from off the plains, and watch their white and lake-like fields, as they float in level bays and winding gulfs about the islanded summits of the lower hills, untouched yet by more than dawn, colder and more quiet than a windless sea under the moon of midnight; watch when the first sunbeam is sent upon the silver channels, how the foam of their undulating surface parts and passes away, and down under their depths the glittering city and green pasture lie like Atlantis, between the white paths of winding rivers; the flakes of light falling every moment faster and broader among the starry spires, as the wreathed surges break and vanish above them, and the confused crests and ridges of the dark hills shorten their grey shadows upon the plain.

Wait a little longer, and you shall see those scattered mists rallying in the ravines, and floating up towards you, along the winding valleys, till they couch in quiet masses, iridescent with the morning light, upon the broad breasts of the higher hills, whose leagues of massy undulation will melt back and back into that robe of material light, until they fade away, lost in its lustre, to appear again above, in the serene heaven, like a wild, bright, impossible dream, foundationless and inaccessible, their very bases vanishing in the unsubstantial and mocking blue of the deep lake below.

Wait yet a little longer, and you shall see those mists

gather themselves into white towers, and stand like fortresses along the promontories, massy and motionless, only piled with every instant higher and higher into the sky, and casting longer shadows athwart the rocks; and out of the pale blue of the horizon you will see forming and advancing a troop of narrow, dark, pointed vapours, which will cover the sky, inch by inch, with their grey network, and take the light off the landscape with an eclipse which will stop the singing of the birds and the motion of the leaves, together; and then you will see horizontal bars of black shadow forming under them, and lurid wreaths create themselves, you know not how, along the shoulders of the hills; you never see them form, but when you look back to a place which was clear an instant ago, there is a cloud on it, hanging by the precipices, as a hawk pauses over his prey. And then you will hear the sudden rush of the awakened wind, and you will see those watch-towers of vapour swept away from their foundation, and waving curtains of opaque rain let down to the valleys, swinging from the burdened clouds in black bending fringes, or pacing in pale columns along the lake level, grazing its surface into foam as they go. And then, as the sun sinks, you shall see the storm drift for an instant from off the hills, leaving their broad sides smoking, and loaded yet with snow-white, torn, steam-like rags of capricious vapour, now gone, now gathered again; while the smouldering sun, seeming not far away, but burning like a red-hot ball beside you, and as if you could reach it, plunges through the rushing wind and rolling cloud with headlong fall, as if it meant to rise no more, dyeing all the air about it with blood. And then you shall hear the fainting tempest die in the hollow of the night, and you shall see a green halo kindling on the summit of the eastern hills, brighter—brighter yet, till the large white circle of the slow moon is lifted up among the barred clouds, step by step, line by line; star after star she quenches with her kindling light, setting in their stead an army of pale, penetrable, fleecy wreaths in the heaven, to give light upon the

earth, which move together, hand in hand, company by company, troop by troop, so measured in their unity of motion that the whole heaven seems to roll with them, and the earth to reel under them. And then wait yet for one hour, until the east again becomes purple, and the heaving mountains, rolling against it in darkness, like waves of a wild sea, are drowned one by one in the glory of its burning: watch the white glaciers blaze in their winding paths about the mountains, like mighty serpents with scales of fire: watch the columnar peaks of solitary snow, kindling downwards, chasm by chasm, each in itself a new morning; their long avalanches cast down in keen streams brighter than the lightning, sending each his tribute of driven snow, like altar-smoke, up to the heaven; the rose-light of their silent domes flushing that heaven about them and above them, piercing with purer light through its purple lines of lifted cloud, casting a new glory on every wreath as it passes by, until the whole heaven, one scarlet canopy, is interwoven with a roof of waving flame, and tossing, vault beyond vault, as with the drifted wings of many companies of angels.

From "Modern Painters"

A STRANGE TRAIL

John Masefield

SARD heard the cork drawn from the bottle and the gurgle as he [Pappa Peppy] drank raw aniseed brandy....

The bottle dropped from his hand. It must still have been a third full, for as it rolled away some liquid gurgled out of it. Pappa Peppy gurgled in sympathy or in tune, and composed himself to sleep, sitting up against the wall. He passed into a drunken unconsciousness almost at once, breathing with dreadful difficulty, being in fact at the point of strangulation, through his throat pressing against

his collar. After two or three convulsive gasps, he shook himself out of his dangerous position and lapsed sideways. "There'll be death upon the sea this night," he murmured; "I've known gales, but never anything like this." After this he slept and the village slept.

It must have been full midnight when the door opened suddenly and the cool night wind blew in from the desert. The woman was there. "Come you," she said.

Pappa Peppy groaned and fought with his drink. Sard rose up and came to the door. The woman had a little leather bag full of food for him and a leather-covered gourd full of water.

"If you go past the houses," she said, "and follow up the cañon, to the end, you will come out below the icefields. In all my living here I have only heard of one man who has ever crossed those fields. His name was Gonzalez: he lived a hundred years ago. He crossed them and reached San Agostino in five days."

"It's San Agostino that I want to reach," Sard said.

"Go then," the woman said, "and may you have that man's luck. He was my grandfather. But know this: you're in the land of the bad men, the land of Red Sleeve and the Jacarillos, and not one other soul for thirty miles would have done what I do, not one other soul."

"Tell me your name," Sard said, "that if ever I get among my people again, I will think of you with gratitude until I die."

"We have no names in the Jacarillo country," she said; "but if ever you come to some church in Christian country, say a prayer to the Virgin for Juanita of the Bolson. And now go."

She was herself gone on the instant and flitted back like a thief into her hut. Pappa Peppy gurgled in his sleep and cried, "I'll deal with you if I can get at you!" and then cried, "O God!" and moaned. Sard knelt down, picked up Pappa Peppy's box of matches, took his two pistols and cartridge-belt, loaded both pistols, slung his provisions over his shoulder, and set out with a pistol in each hand from that city of the Jacarillos.

Fifty yards from the huts, he entered the cañon, now stealthy with the noises of the night. Near the mouth of the cañon a sentry lay asleep within the ring of his rope which screened him from snakes. Sard crept past him on tiptoe, but need not have taken such precaution, since the man slept like the dead. Not far away, something large, grey and silent, probably a wolf, which had been creeping up to steal the sentry's food, glided into the sage brush.

In another fifty yards the trail turned upwards into the hills, out of sight of the gully. Sard went on as hard as he could put foot to ground for three hours. Then coming suddenly round a corner, walking rather carelessly, thinking that he was quite out of the reach of pursuit, the faint smell of smoke crossed his path; immediately he was in sight of three mud huts by the side of the road. He was reassured an instant later by seeing that two of the huts were ruined. There came a rustling from within the third; a hideous old Indian woman came out. She might have been any age from a hundred and twenty downwards. They looked at each other in the grey light in the heart of the wilderness. She mumbled something in reply to his question, but any wits she once had had long since gone.

Sard pointed to the snowy peaks below the stars in the sky. He asked in Spanish, "Is there a trail across the Sierras?" He made signs of a trail and of mountains.

Some memory lit up intelligence in her faded mind. She laughed. "They all go over the mountains," she said. "All the young men go into the mountains. That's why all the mountains are white, for all their bones are on the mountains. Your bones will be white on the mountains. I live up here among the mountains and I can hear them. All the round white skulls come rolling down the mountains." She ran into her hut and returned with the skulls of three white men. "They all rolled down the mountain," she said, "for they are Indian mountains, and the white men know much, but they don't know about the mountains. By and by I'll have

your skull. I'll put him in the ants' nest to clean and I'll keep him on the shelf."

Sard hurried away from her, but for about half a mile she followed him, hugging the skulls. He pushed uphill as hard as he could go, but in the stillness of that glen he could hear her voice for a long time, saying that his skull would roll down the mountain.

There was now no trail, but he fixed his course straight to the frozen crag, which gleamed above him against the sky. Dawn found him still pushing onward and upward in a trackless wilderness that seemed to bear no living thing. When the sun rose, he found some shelter among the rocks, where he might defend himself if attacked. He expected that the Jacarillos would trail him as soon as it was light enough to see tracks, and that with ponies or donkeys they might well be on him before noon. In this he was unjust to the Jacarillos: they did not trail those whom they judged to be already doomed. In his shelter he ate, drank and then slept; he did not wake until the setting sun shone through a crevice among the rocks on to his face. After eating and drinking he set out again into the Sierras.

All littleness was gone from the mountains now. His world was one with the elements, the sky, great stars, and gigantic crags, silent except when now and then there came a roar from something breaking in the glacier, or the thunder of a boulder falling. The moon rose to light his going up a slope of rock, which seemed curtained by other slopes of rock. Here he laid down one of the revolvers which he had taken from Pappa Peppy. He laid it on the rock beside him. Instantly it slithered down, gathering small stones as it went, till it was thundering down the rocky slope far, far below, with an avalanche about it. He saw it flash and presently heard a report, and realised, as he had not realised before, that he might have slipped like the gun and gone gliddering down among the boulders in the same way.

At about midnight he reached a ledge of rock, where he

slept until daybreak. When he woke he saw what he took to be three cloaked Indians, sitting on the ledge beside him. He sat up and looked at them. They withdrew their heads from their blankets. They were no Indians, but vultures. They looked at him with interest and without fear. He spoke to them, they muttered a little and moved uneasily.

"So you're waiting for me to die, are you?" he said. "I'm not dead yet." They craned and sidled with their bald heads. "Get out of this," he said, smiting at one. It went sidelong off the ledge, and the others with it. They beat with their wings, recovered their poise, and sailed out into the air. An instant before, they had been squalid, stinking, huddled creatures; now they were floating in the majesty of beauty. Two hovered at a little distance from the ledge, the third rose above it in a short spire. He had never seen any bird of prey circling at such close quarters. He watched the great pinions soar up above him, while the others hovered away and mewed and cried. Suddenly the bird above him launched itself down upon him and beat him with its great wings, so that he was almost over the ledge. Instantly it was up in the air and repeated its swoop. It came down sighing and struck and hissed at Sard, and immediately the two birds who had been waiting, swooped and struck at him. "So you're going to get me down into the valley and pick my bones," Sard said. He lay flat down upon the ledge, face upwards, and drew his other revolver. The bird came down on him again, crying and smiting. He fired; the bird went up, poised, went up a few feet further, beat with its wings, mounted yet a little further like a towering partridge, then crumpled up and dropped. Sard saw it strike and roll and lie still. Its companions swayed away to look at it, and then descended to the body.

Sard looked down and wondered how he could ever have climbed that crag at night without falling. He knew that he could not go down it by daylight. He looked at the crag which rose up above him from the ledge, and felt that he could

not climb it. He had reached a point from which he could neither go nor come. He ate and drank and then thought, "Perhaps when I'm rested I will be able to try this rock. If not, I shall end here."

He slept on the rock until the beating of the midday sun became unbearable. He twisted to an angle where his head could lie in some shade, and slept again. He was aware in his sleep that someone stood upon that ledge and told him to come on. He sat up, looked at this figure and knew that it was only partly human. In his dream, or fever, it seemed like the spirit of the *Pathfinder*, fierce, hard, and of great beauty. He told himself, "This is all nonsense. The *Pathfinder* is a ship, she has not even a figurehead, but a fiddlehead; this is a woman."

But the figure said, "I am the *Pathfinder*. I can find a path for you." She lead on up the rock and Sard followed. He could see her in front of him; he followed where she trod. There was a great star above the crags. The crags were thick with greenish ice, the star shone upon the ice, till it glittered like a crown. Sard said, "I'll put my hand on the crown of the mountain."

At daybreak he came out on a wild place near a brook.

There was grass there whistling in the wind. There was a little bird somewhere, not far away, crying a double note that sounded like a curse, continually repeated. Sard drank of the brook, sheltered from the wind and slept; nor did he know when the woman had passed from there. Afterwards, he was puzzled about that part of his march; sometimes it was in his mind all blurred, like the events of a fever, sometimes it seemed the only reality among things dreamed.

When he woke he was out in the snowfields. He thought that he had reached the summit, but he found that he was only on the top of a small shoulder. Beyond and above him were crags, sprinkled, heaped or overwhelmed with snow, some of it dirty from fallings of rock, some of it violet from shadow, the rest of it glittering. There was no sign of any

living thing. If he looked up, there were peaks glittering against the sky; if he looked down, there were glittering snowfields, crags and chasms.

He could not see the country from which he had come, because greyness was hiding it from him. Grey shapes, like the leaders of a herd, were moving into it. A herd of mists followed their leaders, so like oxen that he expected them to bellow. They jostled on in myriads till all the lower slopes of the mountains were blotted out. Soon a sea of mist washed all about those miles of Sierras; the peaks stood out of this sea like islands. "If that sea rises," Sard thought, "I shall be drowned up here. I must move while I have light."

He had his direction from the sun. He pushed on, now up, now down, over snow of every degree of rottenness. He had a little food left in his wallet. He guarded this, but slaked his thirst with snow and chewed upon a piece of his belt.

In the evening it began to blow bitterly cold with a small snow. In one of the whirls of the gale he found himself upon a piece of a made road. He could hardly believe his eyes; but there was no doubt; it had been made by men. It had been cut out of the side of the crag; the crag at its side had been carven with the figures of the gods. A tall god with his tongue transfixed by a bramble was pouring libation on an altar; beyond the altar was a door leading into the crag. As he stood there, the sun shone out through a rift to light the eyrie he was perched upon. Used as he was to heights, it made him sick to think of the will that had spent men, like water, to hew that rock at that height. The sun shone into the doorway. Looking within, he saw two figures upon a throne. They sat side by side, holding each other's hands. They were staring straight at him. "Yes," he said, "what are you? Who are you there?" Peering in, he saw that they were the bodies of a king and queen who had been buried there in that mountain tomb, perhaps centuries before the Spaniards came. He crept into the tomb to look at them. Once the door of a slab of stone had been mortared flush with the

face of the crag, but it had fallen like most of the road that led to it. The mummies sat side by side, holding each other's hands. Masks of gold still covered their faces. The masks had, no doubt, been modelled on the dead faces and preserved likenesses of that king and queen. Both were tiny; they looked like children to Sard. They were the rulers who had driven men up the mountain to make that road. All about the walls were paintings of the lives of those two.

"Ah," Sard thought, "he was a king and when he died the kingdom fell to pieces. She knew that it would be so, so when he died she killed herself."

The sun, which had been shining, was now suddenly blotted out again. A cloud of intense blackness seemed to rush out of the heaven to engulf the crag. The air was filled with crying and small snow. Sard sat there in the darkness and fell asleep at the feet of the king and queen.

He woke often, because it was so cold. Whenever he woke, he heard the gale full of bells tolling, or voices crying to him: often he answered them. Once or twice he went to the door to answer voices; but no one was there except the gale, full of small snow. He wondered if he were alive, or if this were death; not final death, but the leaving of the body which is the prelude to it.

In the morning the wind dropped: the snow ceased: the storm went bodily off across heaven like an army that had been beaten, in a sullen mass, with rearguards of sulphurous smoke followed fast by the angels of heaven with light. The sun followed hot upon it with fire, till presently it was far, far away, engaged upon the southern horizon.

As Sard came out into the sun, he saw a name cut or scratched upon the lintel of the door of the tomb. The letters were lastingly but rudely graven by a strong illiterate.

GONZALEZ MEDINA

1795

"Gonzalez Medina," he said. "That woman's grandfather.

The only man who ever crossed these mountains. Here I am upon his track. If he blazed his trail thus, I may still find my way out."

The finding of that blaze was companionship to him all that day, which was a hard one, one of his hardest.

From "Sard Harker"

THE ABBOT OF SHEKAR CHÖ-TE

Lieut.-Colonel C. K. Howard-Bury

JUNE 17 we spent resting at Shekar. In the morning Morshead and I went to call on the Jongpen; he lives in a poor house at the foot of the hill, his official residence being three-quarters of the way up, but he wisely prefers to live at the bottom, not being very fond of exercise. He was busy adding on to his house, and we were shown into the old part in which he was living. He gave us the usual Tibetan tea and sweetmeats and then insisted on our having macaroni and meat seasoned with chillies, which was excellent, followed by junket served in china bowls. He had some very fine tea-cups of agate and hornblende schist with finely chased silver covers, which I admired very much.

That afternoon several of us went up to visit the big monastery of Shekar Chö-te. This consisted of a great number of buildings terraced one above the other on a very steep rocky slope. A path along the face of the rock brought us to several archways under which we passed. We then had to go up and down some picturesque but very steep and narrow streets until we came to a large courtyard. On one side of this was the main temple. In this temple were several gilt statues of Buddha decorated all over with turquoises and other precious stones, and behind them a huge figure of Buddha quite fifty feet high. Every year, they told us, they had to re-gild his face. Around were eight curious figures

about ten feet high and dressed in quaint flounces which they said were the guardians of the shrine. We then went up steep and slippery ladders, in almost pitch darkness, and came out on a platform opposite the face of the great Buddha. Here were some beautifully chased silver teapots and other interesting pieces of silver, richly decorated in relief. Inside the shrine, which was very dark, the smell of rancid butter was almost overpowering as all the lamps burnt butter. The official head of the monastery showed us round. He was apparently appointed from Lhasa, and was responsible for all the revenues and financial dealings of the monastery. We were given very buttery tea in the roof courtyard, which was a pleasant spot, and here I photographed a group of several monks. They had never seen a camera or photographs before, but they had heard that such a thing was possible and were very much interested in it. Before leaving we went in to see the Head Lama, who had lived over sixty-six years in this monastery. He was looked upon as being extremely holy and as the re-incarnation of a former abbot, and they therefore practically worshipped him. There was only one tooth left in his mouth, but for all that he had a very pleasant smile. All around his room were silver-gilt Chortens inlaid with turquoises and precious stones and incense was being burnt everywhere. After much persuasion the other monks induced him to come outside and have his photograph taken, telling him that he was an old man, and that his time on earth was now short, and they would like to have a picture of him to remember him by. He was accordingly brought out, dressed up in robes of beautiful golden brocades, with priceless silk Chinese hangings arranged behind him while he sat on a raised dais with his *dorje* and his bell in front of him, placed upon a finely carved Chinese table. The fame of this photograph spread throughout the country and in places hundreds of miles away I was asked for photographs of the Old Abbot of Shekar Chö-te, nor could I give a more welcome present at any house than a photograph of the Old Abbot.

Being looked upon as a saint, he was worshipped, and they would put these little photographs in shrines and burn incense in front of them.

From "Mount Everest: The Reconnaissance, 1921"

THE LEGEND OF TINGRI

A. F. R. Wollaston

By a liberal interpretation of the expression "Mount Everest" we considered it necessary to explore the surrounding country as far as a hundred miles or more from the mountain, east, north and south; in all directions, that is, excepting toward the forbidden territory of Nepal. So it happened one day in July that Major Morshead and I, already nearly fifty miles from Everest, set out in a south-westerly direction, he anxious to add a few hundred square miles of new country to his map, and I intent on animals and plants. Our way lay across the Tingri Plain to Langkor, both names famous in the annals of Tibetan Buddhism. The following story was told us by an old monk in the monastery at Langkor:

Many generations ago there was born in the Indian village of Pulahari a child named Tamba Sangay. When he grew into a youth he became restless and dissatisfied with his native place, so he went to visit the Lord Buddha and asked him what he should do. The Lord Buddha told him that he must take a stone and throw it far, and where the stone fell there he should spend his life. So Tamba Sangay took a rounded stone and threw it far, so that no one saw where it fell. Many months he sought in vain until he passed over the Hills into Tibet, and there he came to a place where, although it was winter, was a large black space bare of snow. The people told him that the cattle walked round and round in that space to keep it clear from snow, and in the middle of it was a rounded stone. So Tamba Sangay knew that the stone

was his, and there he made a cell and dwelt until he was taken on wings to Heaven. And the place is called Langkor, which means "the cattle go round," to this day. The people for many miles about had heard the stone as it came flying over the Hills from India; it made a whistling sound like Ting, so the country came to be called Tingri, the Hill of the Ting.

We visited the Langkor monastery and saw the casket in which the stone of Tamba Sangay is kept, only to be opened once a year by a high dignitary from Lhasa. Close by was a fair-sized river, the bridge over which had been carried away by a recent flood. The greater part of the population was busily engaged in repairing the bridge, to the accompaniment at frequent intervals of hideous blasts on a large conch-shell: this, we were told, was to keep the rain away and stop the floods. Rain fell heavily in spite of the noise, but the bridge was finished before nightfall.

From "Mount Everest: The Reconnaissance, 1921"[1]

SWISS PICTURES

E. H. Blakeney

I. After-glow

The daylight slowly fades; each waterfall
Proclaims a solemn compline; the still lake
Takes to its heart the farewell of the sun;
The woods anew begin their tender dreams;
And lo, upon this mighty cirque of cliff,
Where snows yet lurk in hollows of the crag,
Steals, like some rose of fire, a sacred gleam
That fills the silent spaces of the night
With unimaginable dawn, and wakes
(Unheard but in the silence of the soul)
Far hallelujahs from the choral heavens.

[1] Mr Wollaston was a member of the Mount Everest expedition, and contributed some chapters to Lieut.-Colonel Howard-Bury's book.

II. Storm on the Summit of the Diablerets, September 1923

Dawn, menacing and lurid. As a shroud,
Grey mists lie heavy on the iron hills
Whence, murmuring, fall in long cascade, white rills
Of ice-born water. Hearken to that loud
Triumphant thunder, while as if 'twere proud
Of its pre-eminence, flames a light that thrills
The riven air, and all the mountain fills
With echoes blown from yonder stormy cloud.

. . . . . .

Standing at gaze on this tremendous ridge,
This fortress of the elements unreined
In their fierce mood, how small a part man seems
Of this huge solitude!—like some frail midge
One instant poised in space, thro' which, dischained,
Sweep Powers of Ruin imaged oft in dreams.

From "In the Vale of Years"

VIEW AND VISION

D. W. Freshfield

I lay alone with the sunset, hard by the Caucasian snow,
And gazed from my eagle's eyrie over infinite space below
And infinite space above me, the lifeless wastes of the sky,
And the fields where men as of old are born, grow weary, and die:
For Phoebus had stooped from the Height and sunk to his nightly rest,
Where the waves and sky were one in the far-off Gates of the West,
And the white-robed, soft mist-maidens, who spring from the salt sea-spray
To dream on the hills at noontide, had quietly melted away:

Bare, boundless, all-embracing, the vault of heaven outspread,
While the face of the earth still glowed with the kiss of the day that was dead,
And the mountains shone transfigured, each hill and valley and stream
Clothed round with light for raiment, and fair as a poet's dream:
A sudden star in the gloaming, a flash in a dusky space,
Shone Phasis, the ancient river, the pride of a vanished race,
At rest in the lap of the lowlands, where, girt in a pomegranate close,
Aietes' city, Kyteia, looks up to the stainless snows. . . .
At my feet lay the Home of the Outlaws, the Vale of a Thousand Towers,
Where murder wades red-handed, knee-deep in a garden of flowers,
Where the glaciers in avalanche fall on a carpet of lily and rose,
And through leagues of glade and forest the fragrant azalea glows;
Where the Snow-Rhododendrons cluster on pastures unbitten by kine,
And above the quivering birch-grove the crests of the Storm-peak shine. . . .
Then slowly o'er hill and valley were spread the wings of the night,
But the frosty summits about me shone forth as pillars of light,
And the ice-stairs, all untrod, from Kaf's Temple of Wingless Peace
Stretched down towards golden Kolkhis, the Land of the Golden Fleece;
While over earth's climbing shadow, unfurled on the field of blue,
Where the banners of fire once flickered the banner of day still flew,

Rose-red on the heights of Elbruz, on the domes that were
built by Dis,
When the lava seethed and weltered where now roll billows
of ice. . . .
As high o'er Rome's Coliseum the purple velarium spread,
A shade to the proud patrician, a shade to the slave just
dead,
So the face of the earth was full of beauty and story and strife,
While the dome of the sky stretched empty above the tur-
moil of life. . . .
Then I watched till the chill before dawn, when the blood
in the veins runs cold,
And the face of the earth was void, but crowded the heavenly
fold;
The moonless vault was ablaze with the splendour of spheres
unknown,
Suns upon suns in systems, each greater far than our own,
And the fragments of orbs in making were a causeway of
living light,
As the star that heralds the morning sailed up on the skirts
of night;
And vain seemed all the beauty and all the strife of a World,
Blotted out in a instant's throb by the Vision of Space un-
furled;
And Night grew greater than Day, and Life grew larger
than Death,
And a man's brief wrestle with Fate as an infant's battle for
breath;
And the body was less than raiment, and our Earth as an
inn on the road,
Where the traveller halts for an hour on his way to some
far-off abode:
And the gods man makes in his image, the creatures of stock
and of stone
That led the nations to pillage, that fought each one for his
own;

The creeds of saints and sages, who strove for a viewless goal,
Were as shadows athwart the ages from the depths of the human soul,
Dim shadows, faint and fleeting, yet born of that Infinite Day
In which on the Heights of Being all shadows must melt away:
For the shackles of flesh were loosed with the fetters of mortal fears,
And the walls of sense fell down to the song of the circling spheres,
And the suns upon suns uncounted were forms of the Living Soul,
The Law that abides in the Heavens to shepherd their flock to its goal,
And Spirit spoke with Spirit, and the part was one with the Whole. . . .
Then the frosty summits about me that loomed like ghosts through the night
Once more in the crystal clearness flashed forth as pillars of light;
Day broke over field and forest, while void was the upper sky:
In that 'still small voice' within me had the Soul of the Worlds passed by?
Had I seen or dreamt the Vision? Let me dream my dream till I die.

From "Unto the Hills"

THE IMPASSABLE HILLS

Hilaire Belloc

At three o'clock the guide knocked at my door, and I rose and came out to him. We drank coffee and ate bread. We put into our sacks ham and bread, and he white wine and I brandy. Then we set out. The rain had dropped

to a drizzle, and there was no wind. The sky was obscured for the most part, but here and there was a star. The hills hung awfully above us in the night as we crossed the spongy valley. A little wooden bridge took us over the young Rhone, here only a stream, and we followed a path up into the tributary ravine which leads to the Nufenen and the Gries. In a mile or two it was a little lighter, and this was as well, for some weeks before a great avalanche had fallen, and we had to cross it gingerly. Beneath the wide cap of frozen snow ran a torrent roaring. I remembered Colorado, and how I had crossed the Arkansaw on such a bridge as a boy. We went on in the uneasy dawn. The woods began to show, and there was a cross where a man had slipped from above that very April and been killed. Then, most ominous and disturbing, the drizzle changed to a rain, and the guide shook his head and said it would be snowing higher up. We went on, and it grew lighter. Before it was really day (or else the weather confused and darkened the sky), we crossed a good bridge, built long ago, and we halted at a shed where the cattle lie in the late summer when the snow is melted. There we rested a moment.

But on leaving its shelter we noticed many disquieting things. The place was a hollow, the end of the ravine—a bowl, as it were; one way out of which is the Nufenen, and the other the Gries. . . .

That bowl or cup below the passes was a carpet of snow, save where patches of black water showed, and all the passes and mountains, from top to bottom, were covered with very thick snow; the deep surface of it soft and fresh fallen. The rain had turned into snow. It was falling thickly all around. Nowhere have I more perceived the immediate presence of great Death. It was far colder, and we felt the beginning of a wind. The clouds had come quite low down.

The guide said it could not be done, but I said we must attempt it. I was eager, and had not yet felt the awful grip of the cold. We left the Nufenen on our left, a hopeless

steep of new snow buried in fog, and we attacked the Gries. For half an hour we plunged on through snow above our knees, and my thin cotton clothes were soaked. So far the guide knew we were more or less on the path, and he went on and I panted after him. Neither of us spoke, but occasionally he looked back to make sure I had not dropped out.

The snow began to fall more thickly, and the wind had risen somewhat. I was afraid of another protest from the guide, but he stuck to it well, and I after him, continually plunging through soft snow and making yard after yard upwards. The snow fell more thickly and the wind still rose.

We came to a place which is, in the warm season, an alp; that is, a slope of grass, very steep but not terrifying; having here and there sharp little precipices of rock breaking it into steps, but by no means (in summer) a matter to make one draw back. Now, however, when everything was still Arctic it was a very different matter. A sheer steep of snow whose downward plunge ran into the driving storm and was lost, whose head was lost in the same mass of thick cloud above, a slope somewhat hollowed and bent inwards, had to be crossed if we were to go any farther; and I was terrified, for I knew nothing of climbing. The guide said there was little danger, only if one slipped one might slide down to safety, or one might (much less probably) get over rocks and be killed. I was chattering a little with cold; but as he did not propose a return, I followed him. The surface was alternately slabs of frozen snow and patches of soft new snow. In the first he cut steps, in the second we plunged, and once I went right in and a mass of snow broke off beneath me and went careering down the slope. He showed me how to hold my staff backwards as he did his alpenstock, and use it as a kind of brake in case I slipped.

We had been about twenty minutes crawling over that wall of snow and ice; and it was more and more apparent that we were in for danger. Before we had quite reached the far side, the wind was blowing a very full gale and roared

past our ears. The surface snow was whirring furiously like dust before it: past our faces and against them drove the snow-flakes, cutting the air: not falling, but making straight darts and streaks. They seemed like the form of the whistling wind; they blinded us. The rocks on the far side of the slope, rocks which had been our goal when we set out to cross it, had long disappeared in the increasing rush of the blizzard. Suddenly as we were still painfully moving on, stooping against the mad wind, these rocks loomed up over as large as houses, and we saw them through the swarming snow-flakes as great hulls are seen through a fog at sea. The guide crouched under the lee of the nearest; I came up close to him and he put his hands to my ear and shouted to me that nothing further could be done—he had so to shout because in among the rocks the hurricane made a roaring sound, swamping the voice.

I asked how far we were from the summit. He said he did not know where we were exactly, but that we could not be more than 800 feet from it. I was but that from Italy and I would not admit defeat. I offered him all I had in money to go on, but it was folly in me, because if I had had enough to tempt him and if he had yielded we should both have died. Luckily it was but a little sum. He shook his head. He would not go on, he broke out, for all the money there was in the world. He shouted me to eat and drink, and so we both did.

Then I understood his wisdom, for in a little while the cold began to seize me in my thin clothes. My hands were numb, my face already gave me intolerable pain, and my legs suffered and felt heavy. I learnt another thing (which had I been used to mountains I should have known), that it was not a simple thing to return. The guide was hesitating whether to stay in this rough shelter, or to face the chances of the descent. This terror had not crossed my mind, and I thought as little of it as I could, needing my courage, and being near to breaking down from the intensity of the cold.

It seems that in a *tourmente* (for by that excellent name

do the mountain people call such a storm) it is always a matter of doubt whether to halt or to go back. If you go back through it and lose your way, you are done for. If you halt in some shelter, it may go on for two or three days, and then there is an end of you.

After a little he decided for a return, but he told me honestly what the chances were, and my suffering from cold mercifully mitigated my fear. But even in that moment, I felt in a confused but very conscious way that I was defeated. I had crossed so many great hills and rivers, and pressed so well on my undeviating arrow-line to Rome, and I had charged this one great barrier manfully where the straight path of my pilgrimage crossed the Alps—and I had failed! Even in that fearful cold I felt it, and it ran through my doubt of return like another and deeper current of pain. Italy was there, just above, right to my hand. A lifting of a cloud, a little respite, and every downward step would have been towards the sunlight. As it was, I was being driven back northward, in retreat and ashamed. The Alps had conquered me. . . .

Well, we returned. Twice the guide rubbed my hands with brandy, and once I had to halt and recover for a moment, failing and losing my hold. Believe it or not, the deep footsteps of our ascent were already quite lost and covered by the new snow since our halt, and even had they been visible, the guide would not have retraced them. He did what I did not at first understand, but what I soon saw to be wise. He took a steep slant downward over the face of the snow-slope, and though such a pitch of descent a little unnerved me, it was well in the end. For when we had gone down perhaps 900 feet, or a thousand, in perpendicular distance, even I, half numb and fainting, could feel that the storm was less violent. Another two hundred, and the flakes could be seen not driving in flashes past, but separately falling. Then in some few minutes we could see the slope for a very long way downwards quite clearly; then, soon after, we saw far below

us the place where the mountain-side merged easily into the plain of that cup or basin whence we had started.

When we saw this, the guide said to me, "Hold your stick thus, if you are strong enough, and let yourself slide." I could just hold it, in spite of the cold. Life was returning to me with intolerable pain. We shot down the slope almost as quickly as falling, but it was evidently safe to do so, as the end was clearly visible, and had no break or rock in it.

So we reached the plain below, and entered the little shed, and thence looking up, we saw the storm above us; but no one could have told it for what it was. Here, below, was silence, and the terror and raging above seemed only a great trembling cloud occupying the mountain. Then we set our faces down the ravine by which we had come up, and so came down to where the snow changed to rain. When we got right down into the valley of the Rhone, we found it all roofed with cloud, and the higher trees were white with snow, making a line like a tide-mark on the slopes of the hills.

I re-entered "The Bear," silent and angered, and not accepting the humiliation of that failure. . . .

But to think of it! I who had all that planned out, and had so nearly done it! I who had cut a path across Europe like a shaft, and seen so many strange places!—now to have to recite all the litany of the vulgar; Bellinzona, Lugano, and this and that, which any railway-travelling fellow can tell you. Not till Como should I feel a man again. . . .

Indeed it is a bitter thing to have to give up one's sword.

From "The Path to Rome"

LIFE ON MOUNT EVEREST

Captain G. I. Finch

[On May 27, 1922, Captain Finch, with Captain Geoffrey Bruce, reached a height of 27,300 feet on Mount Everest, after having camped for two nights and a day in a snowstorm at 25,500 feet.]

MEN who habitually grapple with difficulty, face danger, and endure privations and pain such as most people can only picture to themselves by a great effort of imagination, are given to making light of what they may have passed through. So it is with Lieut.-Colonel Norton and his gallant comrades. In his last thrilling despatch, the hardships and the miseries of discomfort suffered, the intensity of their struggles, and the perilous nature of the undertaking are rarely mentioned, and then only to be dismissed with a laugh as being all in the day's work.

Those who have never fought their way, grimly and painfully inch by inch, harried by the pitiless frozen blast of the west wind, on Everest's towering ridges and storm-swept crests; those who have never endured in a high camp the long hours of night, with spicules of wind-driven snow penetrating all clothing and stabbing the skin with icy-hot thrusts, the while a gale of wind tears at and threatens the existence of the tent, the one frail shelter between life and death; those who have never experienced what is the common lot of climbers on Everest, can have but little idea of what the men who have contributed to the last despatch have actually undergone.

They tell of their experiences with a happy humour and directness, practically dismissing the crude unpleasantnesses, so that one might almost imagine that an attempt to climb to the summit of the highest mountain in the world were nothing more than a rather strenuous walk, the pace hampered a little, it is true, by the shortcomings of the atmosphere.

The highest slopes of Mount Everest, above the North Col (23,000 feet), are the stage upon which the drama of the last three attempts was played out to such a tragic ending. Twice had the mountain flung its impenetrable curtain of blinding snowstorms across the stage and driven the expedition back from the Col and Camp Three to the base and Camp One. But at last the weather brightens up. On 28th May the party once more sets out for the North Col Camp, a long trek—yet child's play to what is to follow higher up; but for all that it has its points; Somervell, for instance, prefers the snow of the North Col as a mattress to the stones of the lower camps; yet the snow is so intensely cold that, even while sleeping, you must roll, twist and wriggle all night long to give that part of your body which has lain nearest the snow a chance to thaw, while another part takes its turn at freezing! A few matter-of-fact words, not even a whole sentence, disposes of the final climb into the North Col, a difficult ascent up 1500 feet of sheer ice and snow, where almost every step must be won with the ice-axe, and where the greatest skill and care are needed to avoid the insidious danger of avalanches.

Norton, absolutely snow-blind, descends these precipitous slopes; a mountaineering feat without parallel. But does he tell us anything about the penalties of an attack of snow-blindness so acute that it lasts for over sixty hours? Suppose your eye-lids are closed; you cannot open them; tightly packed in between eye-ball and eye-lid are sharp glass fragments; do what you will, you cannot prevent the eye-balls moving, they seem to roll and revolve round and round; now up, then down; now to one side, then to the other; can you imagine a more exquisitely sharp agony? That is precisely what an attack of snow-blindness feels like. Sixty hours can be a long time.

On 2nd June Mallory and Geoffrey Bruce, with a retinue of those wonderful Nepalese porters, who have indeed well earned their nickname, the "Tigers," set out from the North

Col to establish the first of the high camps, about 25,000 feet. The weather conditions are perfect. But no sooner have they threaded a way through the intricate maze of crevasses between the camp and the foot of the great north ridge of Everest, than they are assailed by the icy blasts of a pitiless west wind. Step by step, and making sure of the security of each foothold, for that wind can not only freeze you to the marrow, but may even blow you over if you are not on your guard, the little party makes its way upwards.

At 25,000 feet some of the porters flag, then fall out. "Tigers" do not give in until there is a very good reason to do so. The long-sustained upward struggle, the lungs gasping for breath and finding scant satisfaction in the rarefied atmosphere, the gnawing wind, from which there is no sheltering, the bitter cold (far more severe in its effects than similar cold at low levels)—these are but a few of the hardships which have driven the "Tigers" to a standstill. But eventually the first high camp is established at 25,300 feet; Geoffrey Bruce and one Lobsang, the "Tiger" of the "Tigers," making two return journeys to the point where most of the porters had had to dump their loads. The two climbers and three porters, the others having returned to the North Col, now settle down for the night in the cramped confines of their little tents.

A meal must be prepared. Can you imagine the misery of cooking up here? The spirit flame is four, five or even more times as large as usual, and proportionately cooler. Hold your hand in the flame for seconds and it will hardly be warmed. The cooking-pot must be filled with snow; not once, but time and again, for the snow is so light and fluffy that a great heap of it melts to produce but a little water.

In order to prevent their freezing so hard that you can no longer put them on in the morning, boots must be accepted as chilly, knobby, uncomfortable bedfellows. Touch metal with your bare fingers and frost-bite is the result. The action of breathing must be carried out, not as the unconscious and

involuntary process it usually is, but voluntary. Let your mind relax in making the small but constantly to be exerted mental effort of forcing yourself to breathe, then soon you will start up with a dread feeling of impending suffocation. In time, even a slight but often repeated mental effort becomes wearisome; the night can be very long in a high camp on Mount Everest. Morning comes at last. Again there are the miseries of cooking, of getting dressed (that is, putting on boots), of packing knapsacks, arranging the climbing rope, and the gnawing pain of hunger which you have not the means, and perhaps not even the inclination, to satisfy.

Next morning (3rd June) Mallory alone is fit to proceed. But one man cannot go on by himself. The first attempt has failed, and the word is given for retreat back to the safety and comfort (both comparative, be it understood!) of a lower level. Norton and Somervell, already on their way up to make the second attempt, are passed before Mallory has shepherded his gallant little party back into the North Col Camp. Norton and Somervell and their faithful retinue of four porters in their turn revel in the joys of a night in camp at 25,300 feet.

On 4th June they continue up the mountain, and eventually establish the highest camp at 26,700 feet. A little over two years ago, no man had ever climbed higher than 24,600 feet, and no camp had ever been pitched and occupied above 23,000 feet! The porters return to North Col. The two sahibs settle down to another night in the highest camp in which man has ever endured the miseries peculiar to such camps. On 5th June, soon after dawn, such is the indomitable will of these two men, they set out on the last lap.

A perfect, almost windless day is their rare good fortune. But the ascent soon develops into an insensate struggle for breath after each step. But they keep at it. At last, at about 28,000 feet, Somervell is beaten. Mark you, he does not give in—he is beaten. Norton, for one whole hour, carries on alone, and then he too is vanquished. In that whole

hour he climbed eight feet! Now we see what it means to be beaten on Everest, when two such mountaineers and athletes have been so reduced.

A long and weary way back. Somervell suffers from the stabbing pain of an incapacitating high-altitude cough and sore throat. But the return is at last safely accomplished, and the second attempt is over.

The third attack is launched. On 6th June Mallory and Irvine, armed with oxygen outfits, berth down in the first high camp. The next day they are in the highest of all camps.

On the morning of 8th June they set out on the last lap. A few hours later they are seen to be going strong at about 28,000 feet.

Mallory and Irvine have not been seen again. Of the manner of their passing and where they rest in their last sleep we know nothing. Their comrades will have done all that is possible to throw light on the mystery of their death and to recover their bodies; but with the breaking of the monsoon the task is a hopeless one, as far as this year is concerned. Great Britain owes her position in the world to-day to the spirit of adventure with which her sons have always been imbued. Irvine and Mallory have not sacrificed their lives in vain.

From the "Daily News," June 28, 1924

RESCUE FROM A CREVASSE

John Tyndall

We moved briskly along the frozen incline, until, after a couple of hours' march, we saw a solitary human being standing on the lateral moraine of the glacier, near the point where we were to quit it for the cave of the Faulberg.

At first this man excited no attention. He stood and watched us, but did not come toward us, until finally our curiosity was aroused by observing that he was one of our own two men.

The glacier here is always cut by crevasses, which, while they present no real difficulty, require care. We approached our porter, but he never moved; and when we came up to him he looked stupid, and did not speak until he was spoken to.

Bennen addressed him in the *patois* of the place, and he answered in the same *patois*. His answer must have been more than usually obscure, for Bennen misunderstood the most important part of it. "My God!" he exclaimed turning to us. "Walters is killed!" Walters was the guide at the Æggischhorn, with whom, in the present instance, we had nothing to do. "No, not Walters," responded the man; "it is my comrade that is killed." Bennen looked at him with a wild bewildered stare. "How killed?" he exclaimed. "Lost in a crevasse," was the reply. We were all so stunned that for some moments we did not quite seize the import of the terrible statement. Bennen at length tossed his arms in the air, exclaiming, "Jesu Maria! what am I to do?" With the swiftness that some ascribe to dreams, I surrounded the facts with imaginary adjuncts, one of which was that the man had been drawn dead from the crevasse, and was now a corpse in the cave of the Faulberg; for I took it for granted that, had he been still entombed, his comrade would have run or called for our aid. Several times in succession the porter affirmed that the missing man was certainly dead. "How does he know that he is dead?" Lubbock demanded. "A man is sometimes rendered insensible by a fall without being killed." This question was repeated in German, but met with the same dogmatic response. "Where is the man?" I asked. "There," replied the porter, stretching his arm towards the glacier. "In the crevasse?" A stolid "*Ja*" was the answer. It was with difficulty that I quelled an imprecation. "Lead the way to the place, you blockhead!" and he led the way.

We were soon beside a wide and jagged cleft which resembled a kind of cave more than an ordinary crevasse. The cleft had been spanned by a snow-bridge, now broken, and to the edge of which footsteps could be traced. The glacier at

the place was considerably torn, but simple patience was the only thing needed to unravel its complexity. This quality our porter lacked, and, hoping to make shorter work of it, he had attempted to cross the bridge. It gave way, and he went down, carrying an immense load of *débris* with him.

We looked into the hole, at one end of which the vision was cut short by darkness, while immediately under the broken bridge it was crammed with snow and shattered icicles. We saw nothing more. We listened with strained attention, and from the depths of the glacier issued a low moan. Its repetition assured us that it was no delusion—the man was still alive. Bennen from the first had been extremely excited; and the fact of his having, as a Catholic, saints and angels to appeal to, augmented his emotion. When he heard the moaning he became almost frantic. He attempted to get into the crevasse, but was obliged to recoil. It was quite plain that a second life was in danger, for my guide seemed to have lost all control. I placed my hand heavily upon his shoulder, and admonished him that upon his coolness depended the life of his friend. "If you behave like a man, we shall save him; if like a woman, he is lost."

A first-rate rope accompanied the party, but unhappily it was with the man in the crevasse. Coats, waistcoats, and braces were instantly taken off and knotted together. I watched Bennen while this work was going on; his hands trembled with excitement and his knots were evidently insecure. The last junction complete, he exclaimed, "Now let me down!" "Not until each of these knots has been tested; not an inch." Two of them gave way and Lubbock's waistcoat also proved too tender for the strain. The *débris* was about forty feet from the surface of the glacier, but two intermediate prominences afforded a kind of footing. Bennen was dropped down upon one of these; I followed, being let down by Lubbock and the other porter. Bennen then descended the remaining distance, and was followed by me. More could not find room.

The shape and size of the cavity were such as to produce a kind of resonance, which rendered it difficult to fix the precise spot from which the sound issued; but the moaning continued, becoming to all appearance gradually feebler. Fearing to wound the man, the ice-rubbish was cautiously rooted away; it rang curiously as it fell into the adjacent gloom. A layer two or three feet thick was thus removed; and finally, from the frozen mass, and so bloodless as to be almost as white as the surrounding snow, issued a single human hand. The fingers moved. Round it we rooted, cleared the arm, and reached the knapsack which we cut away. We also regained our rope. The man's head was then laid bare, and my brandy flask was immediately at his lips. He tried to speak, but the words jumbled themselves to a dull moan. Bennen's feelings got the better of him at intervals; he wrought like a hero, but at times he needed guidance and stern admonition.

The arms once free, we passed the rope underneath them, and tried to drag the man out. But the ice-fragments round him had regelated so as to form a solid case. Thrice we essayed to draw him up, thrice we failed; he had literally to be hewn out of the ice, and not until his last foot was extricated were we able to lift him. By pulling him from above, and pushing him from below, the man was at length raised to the surface of the glacier.

For an hour we had been in the crevasse in shirt-sleeves—the porter had been in it for two hours—and the dripping ice had drenched us. Bennen, moreover, had worked with the energy of madness, and now the reaction came. He shook as if he would fall to pieces; but brandy and some dry covering revived him. The rescued man was helpless, unable to stand, unable to utter an articulate sentence. Bennen proposed to carry him down the glacier towards home. Had this been attempted the man would certainly have died on the ice. Bennen thought he could carry him for two hours; but the guide underrated his own exhaustion and overrated the vitality of the porter. "It cannot be thought of," I said; "to

the cave of Faulberg, where we must tend him as well as we can." We got him to the side of the glacier, where Bennen took him on his back; in ten minutes he sank under his load. It was now my turn, so I took the man on my back, and plodded on with him as far as I was able. Helping each other thus by turns, we reached the mountain grotto.

The sun had set, and the crown of the Jungfrau was embedded in amber light. Thinking that the Märjelin See might be reached before darkness, I proposed starting in search of help. Bennen protested against my going alone, and I thought I noticed moisture in Lubbock's eye. Such an occasion brings out a man's feelings if he have any. I gave them both my blessing and made for the glacier. But my anxiety to get quickly clear of the crevasses defeated its own object. Thrice I found myself in difficulty, and the light was visibly departing. The conviction deepened that persistence would be folly, and the most impressive moment of my existence was that on which I stopped at the brink of a profound fissure and looked upon the mountains and the sky. The serenity was perfect—not a cloud, not a breeze, not a sound, while the last hues of sunset spread over the solemn west.

I returned; warm wine was given to our patient, and all our dry clothes were wrapped around him. Hot-water bottles were placed at his feet, and his back was briskly rubbed. He continued to groan a long time, but finally both this and the trembling ceased. Bennen watched him solemnly, and at length muttered in anguish, "Sir, he is dead!" I leaned over the man and found him breathing gently; I felt his pulse—it was beating tranquilly. "Not dead, dear old Bennen; he will be able to crawl home with us in the morning." This prediction was justified by the event; and two days afterwards we saw him at Laax, minus a bit of his ear, with a bruise upon his cheek, and a few scars upon his hand, but without a broken bone or serious injury of any kind.

The self-denying conduct of the second porter made us forget his stupidity—it may have been stupefaction. As I lay

there wet, through the long hours of that dismal night, I almost registered a vow never to tread upon a glacier again. But, like the forces in the physical world, human emotions vary with their distance from their origin, and a year afterwards I was again upon the ice.

From "Hours of Exercise in the Alps"

THE DEATH OF BENNEN

John Tyndall

We were walking in the following order: Bevard, Nance, Bennen, myself,[1] Boissonnet, and Rebot.

Having crossed over about three-quarters of the breadth of the couloir, the two leading men suddenly sank considerably above their waists. Bennen tightened the rope. The snow was too deep to think of getting out of the hole they had made, so they advanced one or two steps, dividing the snow with their bodies. Bennen turned round and told us he was afraid of starting an avalanche; we asked whether it would not be better to return and cross the couloir higher up. To this the three Ardon men opposed themselves; they mistook the proposed precaution for fear and the two leading men continued their work. After three or four steps gained in the aforesaid manner, the snow became hard again. Bennen had not moved—he was evidently undecided what he should do; as soon, however, as he saw hard snow again, he advanced and crossed parallel to, but above, the furrow the Ardon men had made. Strange to say the snow supported him. While he was passing I observed that the leader, Bevard, had about twenty feet of rope coiled round his shoulder. I of course at once told him to uncoil it and get on the *arête*, from which he was not more than fifteen feet distant. Bennen then told me to follow. I tried his steps, but sank up to my waist in the

[1] P. C. Gosset is the narrator.

very first. So I went through the furrows, holding my elbows close to my body, so as not to touch the sides. This furrow was about twelve feet long, and, as the snow was good on the other side, we had all come to the false conclusion that the snow was accidentally softer there than elsewhere. Boissonet then advanced; he had made but a few steps when we heard a deep cutting sound. The snowfield split in two about fourteen or fifteen feet above us. The cleft was at first quite narrow, not more than an inch broad. An awful silence ensued; it lasted but a few seconds, and then it was broken by Bennen's voice, "*Wir sind alle verloren*" ("We are all lost"). His words were slow and solemn, and those who knew him felt what they really meant when spoken by such a man as Bennen. They were his last words. I drove my alpenstock into the snow, and brought the weight of my body to bear on it; it went in to within three inches of the top. I then waited. It was an awful moment of suspense. I turned my head towards Bennen to see whether he had done the same thing. To my astonishment, I saw him turn round, face the valley, and stretch out both arms. The ground on which we stood began to move slowly, and I felt the utter uselessness of my alpenstock. I soon sank up to my shoulders and began descending backwards. From this moment I saw nothing of what had happened to the rest of the party. With a good deal of trouble I succeeded in turning round. The speed of the avalanche increased rapidly; and before long I was covered up with snow and in utter darkness. I was suffocating, when with a jerk I suddenly came to the surface again. The rope had caught most probably on a rock, and this was evidently the moment when it broke.

I was on a wave of the avalanche, and saw it before me as I was carried down. It was the most awful sight I ever witnessed. The head of the avalanche was already at the spot where we had made our last halt. The head alone was preceded by a thick cloud of snow-dust; the rest of the avalanche was clear. Around me I heard the horrid hissing

of the snow, and far before me the thundering of the foremost part of the avalanche. To prevent myself sinking again, I made use of my arms much in the same way as when swimming in a standing position. At last I noticed that I was moving slower; then I saw the pieces of snow in front of me stop at some yards' distance; then the snow straight before me stopped, and I heard on a large scale the same creaking sound that is produced when a heavy cart passes over hard-frozen snow in winter. I felt that I also had stopped, and instantly threw up both arms to protect my head in case I should again be covered up.

I had stopped, but the snow behind me was still in motion; its pressure on my body was so strong that I thought I should be crushed to death. This tremendous pressure lasted but a short time, and ceased as suddenly as it had begun. I was then covered up by snow coming from behind me. My first impulse was to try and uncover my head—but this I could not do; the avalanche had frozen by pressure the moment it stopped, and I was frozen in.

Whilst trying vainly to move my arms, I suddenly became aware that the hands as far as the wrist had the faculty of motion. The conclusion was easy, they must be above the snow. I set to work as well as I could; it was time, for I could not have held out much longer. At last I saw a faint glimmer of light. The crust above my head was getting thinner, and it let a little air pass, but I could not reach it any more with my hands; the idea struck me that I might pierce it with my breath.

After several efforts I succeeded in doing so, and felt suddenly a rush of air towards my mouth; I saw the sky again through a little round hole. A dead silence reigned around me; I was so surprised to be still alive, and so persuaded at the first moment that none of my fellow-sufferers had survived, that I did not even think of shouting for them. I then made vain efforts to extricate my arms, but found it impossible; the most I could do was to join the ends of my

fingers, but they could not reach the snow any longer. After a few minutes I heard a man shouting; what a relief it was to know that I was not the sole survivor! to know that perhaps he was not frozen in and could come to my assistance! I answered; the voice approached, but seemed uncertain where to go, and yet it was now quite near. A sudden exclamation of surprise. Rebot had seen my hands. He cleared my head in an instant, and was about to try and cut me out completely, when I saw a foot above the snow, and so near to me that I could touch it with my arms, although they were not quite free yet. I at once tried to move the foot; it was my poor friend's. A pang of agony shot through me as I saw that the foot did not move. Poor Boissonnet had lost sensation, and was perhaps already dead. Rebot did his best; after some time he wished me to help him, so he freed my arms a little more, so that I could make use of them. I could do but little, for Rebot had torn the axe from my shoulder as soon as he had cleared my head (I generally carry an axe separate from my alpenstock—the blade tied to the belt, and the handle attached to the left shoulder). Before coming to me Rebot had helped Nance out of the snow; he was lying nearly horizontally, and was not much covered over. Nance found Bevard, who was upright in the snow, but covered up to the head.

After about twenty minutes the two last-named guides came up. I was at length taken out; the snow had to be cut with the axe down to my feet before I could be pulled out.

A few minutes after 1 o'clock P.M. we came to my poor friend's face. I wished the body to be taken out completely, but nothing could induce the three guides to work any longer, from the moment they saw that it was too late to save him. I acknowledge that they were nearly as incapable of doing anything as I was. When I was taken out of the snow the cord had to be cut. We tried the end going towards Bennen, but could not move it; it went nearly straight down,

and showed us that there was the grave of the bravest guide the Valais ever had, and ever will have.

The cold had done its work on us; we could stand it no longer and began the descent. We followed the frozen avalanche for about twenty-five minutes, that being the easiest way of progressing, and then took the track we had made in the morning; in five hours we reached Ardon.

From "Hours of Exercise in the Alps"

TO F. J. D.

OBIIT A.D. 1905

D. W. Freshfield

KNIGHT-ERRANT of the glacier-cleaving blade,
Whose cottage lies hard on the narrow way
Trodden in summer by the World at play—
The World that hurries home to drive its trade;
Then left to silence, in the two-fold shade
Of winter and Mont Blanc, where no warm ray
Breaks the white darkness of the shortest day,
And Spring's first blooms in Summer's lap are laid:

Let the frosts bite; they cannot chill the glow
Lit by the memories of other years;
Embers through which shines the far Syrian snow,
Or Caucasus its conquered peaks uprears;
Smoke-wreaths that frame old friends—young faces too—
For old and young find guide and friend in you.

From "Unto the Hills"

TO M. A. C.

OBIIT A.D. 1887

D. W. Freshfield

TYPE of the veterans of a bygone day,
When all the silver Alps were holy ground,
And few the feet that ventured o'er the bound
Of the white realm that owns the Frost-King's sway,
Guide of my boyhood, old Michel Couttet,
Through life's long walk in all things faithful found,
A village sage, by fourscore winters crowned,
Your upright strength in peace has passed away.

You lived too soon to join in the great fight,
To lead with François, or to climb with Croz;
Your care to keep Jacques Balmat's path in sight,
Hand down the craft that conquers ice and snow;
We, victors hailed on every Alpine height,
To such forerunners all our victories owe.

From "Unto the Hills"

BREAKFAST WITH THE PRINCE OF THE MIST

Theodore Watts-Dunton

WHEN we reached the spot indicated by the Gypsy as being Winifred's haunt, the ledge where she was in the habit of coming for her imaginary interviews with the "Prince of the Mist," we did not stay there, but for a time still followed the path, which from this point became rougher and rougher, alongside deep precipices and chasms. Every now and then she would stop on a ledge of rock, and, without staying her prattle for a moment, stoop

down and examine the earth with eyes that would not have missed the footprint of a rat. When I [Henry Aylwin] saw her pause, as she sometimes would in the midst of her scrutiny, to gaze inquiringly down some gulf, which then seemed awful to my inexperienced eyes, but which later on in the day, when I came to see the tremendous chasms of that side of Snowdon, seemed insignificant enough, the circulation of my blood would seem to stop, and then rush again through my body more violently than before. And while the patrinchase went on, and the morning grew brighter and brighter, the Gypsy's lithe, cat-like tread never faltered. The rise and fall of her bosom were as regular and as calm as in the public-house. Such agility and such staying power in a woman astonished me. Finding no trace of Winnie, we returned to the little plateau by Knockers' Llyn.

"This is the place," said the Gypsy; "it used to be called in old times the haunted llyn, because when you sings the Welsh dukkerin gillie here or plays it on a crwth, the Knockers answers it. I dare say you've heard o' what the Gorgios call the triple echo o' Llyn Ddu'r Arddu. Well, it's somethin' like that, only bein' done by the knocking sperrits, it's grander and don't come 'cept when they hears the Welsh dukkerin gillie. Now, you must hide yourself somewheres while I go and touch the crwth in her favourite place. I think she'll come to that. I wish though I hadn't brought ye," she continued, looking at me meditatively; "you're a little winded a-ready, and we ain't begun the rough climbing at all. Up to this 'ere pool Winnie and me and Rhona Boswell used to climb when we was children; it needed longer legs nor ourn to get further up, and you're winded a-ready. If she should come on you suddent, she's liker than not to run for a mile or more up that path where we've just been and then to jump down one of them chasms you've just seed. But if she does pop on ye, don't you try to grab her, whatever you do; leave me alone for that. You ain't got strength enough to grab a hare; you ought to be in bed. Besides, she

won't be skeared at me. But," she continued, turning round to look at the vast circuit of peaks stretching away as far as the eye could reach, "we shall have to ketch her to-day somehow. She'll never go back to the cottage where you went and skeared her; and if she don't have a fall, she'll run about these here hills till she drops. We shall have to ketch her to-day somehow. I'm in hopes she'll come to the sound of my crwth, she's so uncommon fond on it; and if she don't come in the flesh, p'rhaps her livin' mullo will come and that'll show she's alive."

She placed me in a crevice overlooking the small lake, or pool, which on the opposite side was enclosed in a gorge, opening only by a cleft to the east. Then she unburdened herself of a wallet containing the breakfast, saying, "When I come back we'll fall to and breakfiss." She then, as though she were following the trail, made a circuit of the pool and disappeared through the gorge. All round the pool there was a narrow ragged ledge leading to this eastern opening. I stood concealed in my crevice and looked at the peaks, or rather at the vast masses of billowy vapours, enveloping them, as they sometimes boiled and sometimes blazed, shaking—when the sun struck one and then another—from brilliant amethyst to vermilion, shot occasionally with purple, or gold, or blue.

A radiance now came pouring through the eastern opening down the gorge or cwm itself, and soon the light vapours floating about the pool were turned to sailing gauzes, all quivering with different dyes, as though a rainbow had become torn from the sky and woven into gossamer hangings and set adrift.

Fatigue was beginning to numb my senses and to conquer my brain. The acuteness of my mental anguish had consumed itself in its own intense fires. The idea of Winifred's danger became more remote. The mist-pageants of the morning seemed somehow to emanate from Winnie.

"No one is worthy to haunt such a scene as this," I

murmured, sinking against the rock, "but Winifred—so beautiful of body and pure of soul. Would that I were indeed her 'Prince of the Mist' and that we could die here together with Sinfi's strains in our ears."

Then I felt coming over me strange influences which afterwards became familiar to me—influences which I can only call the spells of Snowdon. They were far more intense than those strange, sweet, wild, mesmeric throbs which I used to feel in Graylingham Wood, and which my ancestress, Fenella Stanley, seems also to have known, but they were akin to them. Then came the sound of Sinfi's crwth and song, and in the distance repetitions of it, as though the spirits of Snowdon were, in very truth, joining in the chorus.

At once a marvellous change came over me. I seemed to be listening to my ancestress, Fenella Stanley, and not to Sinfi Lovell. I was hearing that strain which in my childhood I had so often tried to imagine, and it was conjuring up the morning sylphs of the mountain air and all the "flower sprites" and "sunshine elves" of Snowdon.

I shook off the spell when the music ceased; then I began to wonder why the Gypsy did not return. I was now faint and almost famished for want of food. I opened the Gypsy's wallet. There was the substantial and tempting breakfast she had brought from the cottage cupboard—cold beef and bread, and ale. I spread the breakfast on the ground.

Scarcely had I done so when a figure appeared at the opening of the gorge and caught the ruddy flood of light. It was Winifred, bare-headed. I knew it was she, and I waited in breathless suspense, crouching close up into the crevice, dreading lest she should see me and be frightened away. She stood in the eastern cleft of the gorge against the sun for fully half a minute, looking around as a stag might look that was trying to give the hunters the slip.

"She has seen the Gypsy," I thought, "and been scared by her." Then she came down and glided along the side of the pool. At first she did not see me, though she stood opposite

and stopped, while the opalescent vapours from the pool steamed around her, and she shone as through a glittering veil, her eyes flashing like sapphires. The palpitation of my heart choked me; I dared not stir, I dared not speak; the slightest movement or the slightest sound might cause her to start away. There was she whom I had travelled and toiled to find—there was she, so close to me, and yet must I let her pass and perhaps lose her after all—for ever?

Where was the Gypsy girl? I was in an agony of desire to see her or hear her crwth, and yet her approach might frighten Winifred to her destruction.

But Winifred, who had now seen me, did not bound away with that heart-quelling yell of hers which I had dreaded. No, I perceived to my astonishment that the flash of the eyes was not of alarm, but of greeting to me—pleasure at seeing me! She came close to the water, and then I saw a smile on her face through the misty film—a flash of shining teeth.

"May I come?" she said.

"Yes, Winifred," I gasped, scarcely knowing what I said in my surprise and joy.

She came slipping round the pool, and in a few seconds was by my side. Her clothes were saturated with last night's rain, but though she looked very cold, she did not shiver, a proof that she had not lain down on the hills, but had walked about during the whole night. There was no wildness of the maniac—there was no idiotic stare. But oh the witchery of the gaze!

If one could imagine the look on the face of a wanderer from the cloud-palaces of the sylphs, or the gaze in the eyes of a statue newly animated by the passion of the sculptor who had fashioned it, or the smile on the face of a wondering Eve just created upon the earth—any one of these expressions would, perhaps, give the idea of that on Winifred's face as she stood there.

"May I sit down, Prince?" said she.

"Yes, Winnie," I replied; "I've been waiting for you."

"Been waiting for poor Winnie?" she said, her eyes sparkling anew with pleasure; and she sat down close by my side, gazing hungrily at the food—her hands resting on her lap.

I laid my hand upon one of hers; it was so damp and cold that it made me shudder.

"Why, Winifred," I said, "how cold you are!"

"The hills are *so* cold!" said she, "*so* cold when the stars go out, and the red streaks begin to come."

"May I warm your hands in mine, Winnie?" I said, longing to clasp the dear fingers, but trembling lest anything I might say or do should bring about a repetition of last night's catastrophe.

"*Will* you, Prince?" said she. "How very, very kind!" and in a moment the hand was between mine.

Remembering that it was through looking into my eyes that she recognized me in the cottage, I now avoided looking straight into hers. All this time she kept gazing wistfully at the food spread out on the ground.

"Are you hungry, Winifred?" I said.

"Oh yes; *so* hungry!" said she, shaking her head in a sad meditative way. "Poor Winifred is so hungry and cold and lonely!"

"Will you breakfast with the Prince of the Mist, Winifred?"

"Oh, may I, Prince?" she asked, her face beaming with delight.

"To be sure you may, Winnie. You may always breakfast with the Prince of the Mist if you like."

"Always? Always?" she repeated.

"Yes, Winnie," I said, as I handed her some bread and meat, which she devoured ravenously.

"Yes, dear Winnie," I continued, handing her a foaming horn of Sinfi's ale, to which she did as full justice as she was doing to the bread and meat. "Yes, I want you to breakfast with me and dine with me always."

"Do you mean *live* with you, Prince?" she asked, looking me dreamily in the face—"live with you behind the white mist? Is this our wedding breakfast, Prince?"

"Yes, Winnie."

Then her eyes wandered down over her dress, and she said, "Ah! how strange I did not notice my green fairy kirtle before. And I declare I never felt till this moment the wreath of gold leaves round my forehead. Do they shine much in the sun?"

"They quite dazzle me, Winnie," I said, arching my hand above my eyes, as if to protect them from the glare.

"Do you have a nice fire there when it's very cold?" she said.

"Yes, Winifred," I said.

She then sank into silence, while I kept plying her with food.

After she had appeased her hunger she sat looking into the pool, quite unconscious, apparently, of my presence by her side, and lost in a reverie similar to that which I had seen at the cottage.

The form her dementia had taken was unlike anything that I had ever conceived. Madness seemed too coarse a note to denote so wonderful and fascinating a mental derangement. Mivart's comparison to a musical-box recurred to me, and seemed most apt. She was in a waking dream. The peril lay in breaking through that dream and bringing her real life before her. There was a certain cogency of dreamland in all she said and did. And I found that she sank into silent reverie simply because she waited, like a person in sleep, for the current of her thoughts to be directed and dictated by external phenomena. As she sat there gazing in the pool, her hand gradually warming between my two hands, I felt that never when sane, never in her most bewitching moments, had she been so lovable as she was now. This new kind of spell she exercised over me it would be impossible to describe. But it sprang from the expression on her face of that absolute freedom from all self-consciousness which is the great charm

in children, combined with the grace and beauty of her own matchless girlhood. A desire to embrace her, to crush her to my breast, seized me like a frenzy.

"Winifred," I said, "you are very cold."

But she was now insensible to sound. I knew from experience now that I must shake her to bring her back to consciousness, for evidently, in her fits of reverie, the sounds falling upon her ear were not conveyed to the brain at all.

I shook her gently, and said, "The Prince of the Mist."

She started back to life. My idea had been a happy one. My words had at once sent her thoughts into the right direction for me.

"Pardon me, Prince," said she, smiling; "I had forgotten that you were here."

"Winifred, I've warmed this hand, now give me the other."

She stretched her other hand across her breast and gave it to me. This brought her entire body close to me, and I said, "Winnie, you are cold all over. Won't you let the Prince of the Mist put his arms round you and warm you?"

"Oh, I should like it so much," she said. "But are you warm, Prince? are you really warm?—your mist is mostly very cold."

"Quite warm, Winifred," I said, as with my heart swelling in my breast, and with eyelids closing over my eyes from very joy, I drew her softly upon my breast once more.

"Yes—yes," I murmured, as the tears gushed from my eyes and dropped upon the soft hair that I was kissing. "If God will but let me have her *thus*! I ask for nothing better than to possess a maniac."

As we sat locked in each other's arms the head of Sinfi appeared round the eastern cliff of the gorge where I had first seen Winifred. The Gypsy had evidently been watching us from there. I perceived that she was signalling to me that I was not to grasp Winifred. Then I saw Sinfi suddenly and excitedly point to the sky over the rock beneath which we sat. I looked up. The upper sky above us was now clear of

morning mist, and right over our heads, Winifred's and mine, there hung a little morning cloud like a feather of flickering rosy gold. I looked again towards the corner of jutting rock, but Sinfi's head had disappeared.

"Dear Prince," said Winifred, "how delightfully warm you are! How kind of you! But are not your arms a little too tight, dear Prince? Poor Winnie cannot breathe. And this thump, thump, thump, like a—like a—fire-engine——*ah!*"

Too late I knew what my folly had done. The turbulent action of my heart had had a sympathetic effect upon hers. It seemed as if her senses, if not her mind, had remembered another occasion, when, as she was lying in my arms, the beating of my heart had disturbed her. In one lightning-flash her real life and all its tragedy broke mercilessly in upon her. The idea of the "Prince of the Mist" fled. She started up and away from me. The awful mimicry of her father's expression spread over her face. With a yell of "Fy Nhad," and then a yell of "Father!" she darted round the pool, and then, bounding up the rugged path like a chamois, disappeared behind a corner of jutting rock.

At the same moment the head of the Gypsy girl reappeared round the eastern cleft of the gorge. Sinfi came quickly up to me and whispered, "Don't follow."

"I will," I said.

"No, you won't," said she, seizing my wrist with a grip of iron. "If you do she's done for. Do you know where she is running to? A couple of furlongs up that path there's another that branches off on the right; it ain't more nor a futt-an'-a-half wide along a precipuss more nor a hundred futt deep. She knows it well. She'll make for that. The cuss is on her wuss nor ever, judgin' from the gurn and the flash of her teeth."

I waited for two or three seconds in the wildest impatience.

"Let's follow her now," I said.

"No, no," she whispered, "not yet, 'less you want to see her tumble down the cliff." After a few minutes Sinfi and

I went up the main pathway. Winnie seemed to have slackened her pace when she was out of sight, for we saw her just turning away on the right at the point indicated by Sinfi. "Give her time to get along that path," said she, "and then she'll be all right."

In a state of agonized suspense I stood there waiting. At last I said:

"I must go after her. We shall lose her—I know we shall lose her."

Sinfi demurred a moment, then acceded to my wish, and we went up the main pathway and peered round the corner of the jutting rock where Winifred had last been visible. There, along a ragged shelf bordering a yawning chasm—a shelf that seemed to me scarce wide enough for a human foot—Winifred was running and balancing herself as surely as a bird over the abyss.

"Mind she doesn't turn round sharp and see you," said the Gypsy. "If she does she'll lose her head and over she'll fall!"

I crouched and gazed at Winifred as she glided along towards a vast mountain of vapour that was rolling over the chasm close to her. She stood and looked into the floating mass for a moment, and then passed into it and was lost from view.

From "Aylwin"

A RACE WITH A FOG

A. P. Harper

March 23rd. "2¼ miles of creek bed; 700 ft. climb at end; 55 minutes' exciting race with fog; thought I'd done it; sold!"

My route lay through some rather bad scrub for 200 yards, and then along an open creek bed for 2¼ miles to the foot of a saddle which lay nearly 700 feet above the creek. I took Betsy the dog (a faithful, though somewhat

useless, companion), who, by the way, rejoined us after leaving Waiho, and travelled at a jog-trot to the foot of the grassy slope to the saddle, because I had seen a small, insignificant piece of fog form and disappear again on Ryan's Peak below the gorge. By the time the foot of the saddle had been reached, a dense bank of fog was crawling through the Balfour Gorge, and had apparently met an opposing current of air from McKenna's Creek, as it remained stationary to all appearances at the lower end of the valley.

The saddle I was making for lay on the above-mentioned ice-worn rocky ridge, between the creek and the glacier, and as it would be only three or four miles from Tasman's great cliffs, it ought to command a grand view of the western face of that peak.

I had just begun the ascent, when a wisp of fog came over the top of the ridge through another saddle, and I realised that though it had stopped at the end of McKenna Valley, it was passing up the Balfour Glacier on the far side of the "Hen and Chicken." Never did I travel uphill so fast before; Betsy now barking and biting my heels, now running ahead, was madly excited, while I scrambled frantically up to get at least one photograph.

The fog now crept along the McKenna Valley, and was close up to me when I reached the bridge thoroughly done, having travelled just over two miles along the creek, and climbed 700 feet in 55 minutes, with 20 lb. of camera, instruments, etc., on my back. It was all to no purpose, however, for though I had raced the fog behind in the McKenna Valley, it had crawled up along the Balfour Range, and only allowed me a momentary glimpse of Tasman's giant buttresses, obscuring everything above the 6000-feet level before I could get my camera out of its case.

"Did you swear?" I am generally asked, when relating this experience. No, I did not say anything at all. I merely upset a large rock lying near me over the 800-feet precipice on to the Balfour Glacier to relieve my mind, and then lay down

to recover my wind. It happens so often—this mad rush uphill to forestall the fog—that one gets used to disappointments.

The only way to secure good photographs is to reach the point by 6 or 7 o'clock in the morning, and sit down quietly until the light improves. Directly the first bit of fog forms anywhere in sight, a set of plates ought to be exposed whether the light is good or bad. Never wait till the last minute, but secure one set at least, and if the fog does give a further chance of exposing in better light, then take another set. I have seen the whole landscape blotted out within three minutes of the first sign of fog. As I was waiting till the last minute to let the light improve on that occasion I was badly sold, and never again did I omit to make one complete set of exposures on arrival.

The rocks above me on Craig's Range were broken into very fantastic shapes, and numerous detached blocks lay on the "Hen and Chicken," which I believe to have been left by the ancient glacier. Betsy and I spent two hours on the ridge, trying to catch some keas, and also dropping stones over the great precipice on to the glacier below. A most fascinating occupation is this, of rolling stones from a great height. Douglas and I have spent hours, when waiting for a fog to lift, in various places, rolling down large rocks, and working as hard as if our lives depended on it, to dislodge one of exceptional dimensions. We often used to try to suggest some reason which would account for the fascination, for I suppose it may be said to be universal. I have never met a man, even amongst those who spend their whole lives on these hills, who did not only thoroughly enjoy seeing a stone career madly down a slope, but who would not go to considerable trouble to start one rolling.

From "Pioneer Work in the New Zealand Alps"

TOPSY THE DOG

A. P. Harper

DOUGLAS, some years before I joined him, used to work alone, and had a wonderfully clever and useful dog named Topsy, who used to keep him well supplied with birds. She would go away to hunt as soon as he began to pitch camp, and return with three birds, two for her master and one for herself; it would be a very poor locality for birds if she couldn't find any, a better forager never existed. In another way, too, she proved useful. Douglas says, that when going up a river, he might find a rocky bluff rising out of the water, which seemed likely to necessitate a high climb. In order to avoid the risk of going forward some distance, and being compelled to return, owing to an impassable corner, he would send Topsy ahead, and sit down for a smoke till she came back. On her return he would always tell from her manner whether a route was practicable round the bluff. So well did she know what he could do that on one occasion she gave him to understand that there was no possibility of going round, but as he was anxious to avoid the high climb, through the bush, over the bluff, he picked up his load and started off to find his way round. Topsy, who was lying down, merely looked up, and, seeing him go where she had been, stayed where she was, and made no attempt to follow, knowing her master would have to return to that spot to begin his climb over. When Douglas came back, having failed, he said Topsy got up, stretched herself, and followed him up the hillside, "with a superior smile on her face."

From "Pioneer Work in the New Zealand Alps"

A WINTER STORM

Sir Leslie Stephen

We had climbed high towards the giant backbone of the mountain, and a few minutes would have placed us on the top. We were in that dim upper stratum, pierced by the nobler peaks alone, and our next neighbour in one direction was the group of Monte Rosa, some sixty miles away, but softly and clearly defined in every detail as an Alpine distance alone can be. Suddenly, without a warning or an apparent cause, the weather changed. The thin white flakes which had been wandering high above our heads changed suddenly into a broad black veil of vapour, dimming square leagues of snow with its shadows. A few salmon-coloured wreaths that had been lingering near the furthest ranges had vanished between two glaciers at the distance, and in their place long trailers of cloud spread themselves like a network of black cobwebs from the bayonet-point of the Weisshorn to the great bastion of the Monte Rosa, and seemed to be shooting out mysterious fibres, as the spider projects its nets of gossamer. Though no formed mass of cloud had showed itself, the atmosphere bathing the Oberland peaks rapidly lost its transparency, and changed into a huge blur of indefinite gloom. A wind, cold and icy enough, had all day been sucked down the broad funnel of the Rhone Glacier, from the limiting ridges; and the light powdery snow along the final parapet of the Gallensback had been blowing off in regular puffs, suggestive of the steady roll of rifle smoke from the file-firing of a battalion in line. Now the wind grew louder and shriller; miniature whirlwinds began to rollick down the steep gullies, and when one turned towards the wind, it seemed as if an ice-cold hand was administering a sharp blow to the cheek. In our solitude, beyond all possible communication with permanent habitation, distant by some hours of walk even from our base at the Grimsel, there was

something almost terrible in this sudden and ominous awakening of the storm spirit. We had ventured into the monster's fastness and he was rousing himself. We depended upon the coming moon for our homeward route, and the moon would not have much power in the thick snowstorm that was apparently about to envelop us.

From "The Playground of Europe"

SUNSET FROM MONT BLANC

Sir Leslie Stephen

But on this glorious summer day the lightnings were at rest; and we could peacefully count over the vast wilderness of peaks which already stretched far and wide beneath our feet. The lower mountain ranges appeared to be drawn up in parallel ranks like the sea waves heaved in calm weather by a monotonous ground-swell. Each ridge was blended into a uniform hue by the intervening atmosphere, sharply defined along the summit line, and yet only distinguished from its predecessor and successor by a delicate gradation of tone. Such a view produces the powerful but shadowy impression which one expects from an opium dream. The vast perspective drags itself out to an horizon so distant as to blend imperceptibly with the lower sky. It has a vague suggestion of rhythmical motion, strangely combined with eternal calm. Drop a pebble into a perfectly still sheet of water; imagine that each ripple is supplanted by a lofty mountain range, of which all detail is lost in purple haze, and that the furthest undulations melt into the mysterious infinite. One gazes with a sense of soothing melancholy as one listens to plaintive modulations of some air of "linked sweetness long drawn out." . . .

One long delicate cloud, suspended in mid-air just below the sun, was gradually adorning itself with prismatic colouring.

Round the limitless horizon ran a faint fog-bank, unfortunately not quite thick enough to produce that depth of colouring which sometimes makes an Alpine sunset inexpressibly gorgeous. The weather—it was the only complaint we had to make—erred on the side of fineness. But the colouring was brilliant enough to prevent any thoughts of serious disappointment. The long series of western ranges melted into a uniform hue as the sun declined in their rear. Amidst their folds the Lake of Geneva became suddenly lighted up in a faint yellow gleam. To the east a blue gauze seemed to cover valley by valley as they sank into night and the intervening ridges rose with increasing distinctness, or rather it seemed that some fluid of exquisite delicacy of colour and substance was flooding all the lower country beneath the great mountains. Peak by peak the high snowfields caught the rosy glow and shone like signal-fires across the dim breadths of delicate twilight. Like Xerxes, we looked over the countless host sinking into rest, but with the rather different reflection, that a hundred years hence they would probably be doing much the same thing, whilst we should long have ceased to take any interest in the performance. And suddenly began a more startling phenomenon. A vast cone, with its apex pointing away from us, seemed to be suddenly cut out from the world beneath; night was within its borders and the twilight still all round; the blue mists were quenched where it fell, and for the instant we could scarcely tell what was the origin of this strange appearance. Some unexpected change seemed to have taken place in the programme; as though a great fold in the curtain had suddenly given way, and dropped on to part of the scenery. Of course a moment's reflection explained the meaning of this uncanny intruder; it was the giant shadow of Mont Blanc, testifying to his supremacy over all meaner eminences. It is difficult to say how sharply marked was the outline, and how startling was the contrast between this pyramid of darkness and the faintly lighted space beyond its influence; a huge inky blot

seemed to have suddenly fallen upon the landscape. As we gazed we could see it move. It swallowed up ridge by ridge, and its sharp point crept steadily from one landmark to another down the broad Valley of Aosta. We were standing, in fact, on the point of the gnomon of a gigantic sundial, the face of which was formed by thousands of square miles of mountain and valley. So clear was the outline that, if figures had been scrawled upon glaciers and ridges, we could have told the time to a second; indeed, we were half inclined to look for our own shadows at a distance so great that whole villages would be represented by a scarcely distinguishable speck of colouring.

The huge shadow, looking ever more strange and magical, struck the distant Becca di Nona, and then climbed into the dark region where the broader shadow of the world was rising into the eastern sky. By some singular effect of perspective, rays of darkness seemed to be converging from above our heads to a point immediately above the apex of the shadowy cone. For a time it seemed that there was a kind of anti-sun in the east, pouring out not only light, but deep shadow as it rose. The apex soon reached the horizon, and then to our surprise began climbing the distant sky. Would it never stop, and was Mont Blanc capable of overshadowing not only the earth but the sky? For a moment or two I fancied, in a bewildered way, that this unearthly object would fairly rise from the ground and climb upwards to the zenith.

But rapidly the lights went out upon the great army of mountains; the snow all round took the livid hue which immediately succeeds an Alpine sunset, and almost at a blow the shadow of Mont Blanc was swallowed up in the general shade of night.

From "The Playground of Europe"

THE SONG OF THE HIMALAYAN FAIRIES

D. W. Freshfield

FAR from the dusky alleys
Of the many-tongued Bazaar,
Beyond the shadowy valleys
Where the Lamaseries are,
Here, where no springtime varies
The frost's eternal span,
We dwell, the Mountain Fairies,
Since first the world began.

The glacier's winding river
Is our familiar road,
Through frozen waves that shiver
We sweep to our abode,
The foam-flakes on our horses
Are sheets of driven snow,
The goal of their wild courses
Only the winds may know.

The tribesmen, bent on plunder,
Who crawl in troops, like mice,
Where keen peaks, rent asunder,
Gird hidden seas of ice
Hear, as the shadows thicken,
Clear through the crystal air,
Sounds that the silence quicken,
Our evening call to prayer.

Then grow in ears that listen,
Beyond the dim crevasse,
The pulse of wings that glisten,
The beat of hosts that pass,

As round earth's loftiest steeples,
In shrines by man untrod,
The sky's primaeval peoples
Assemble unto God.

From our far-shining stations,
Where Death finds nought to slay,
We watch the way-worn nations
Toil upward from their clay;
We wait on our white islands
Of everlasting light
For souls who love the Highlands,
That soar above the Night.

For them we weave strange dances,
Like cloudlets "lightly curled,"
We whisper them in trances
The Secret of the World;
Those whom we show our faces
Are fain with us to dwell
In the elemental spaces,
Remote from Heaven or Hell.

From "Unto the Hills"

IN HANGING GARDEN GULLY

C. E. Montague

To climb up rocks is like all the rest of your life, only simpler and safer. In all the rest of your life, any work you may do, by way of a trade, is a taking of means to some end. That end may be good. We all hope it is. But who can be sure? Misgiving is apt to steal in. Are you a doctor—is it your job to keep all the weak ones alive? Then are you not spoiling the breed for the future? Are you a

parson or politician or some sort of public improver, always trying to fight evil down? May you not then be making a muff every day of somebody else who ought to have had his dragon to fight, with his own bow and spear, when you rushed in to rob him and the other little St Georges of discipline and of victory? Anyhow, all the good ends seem a good long way off, and the ways to them dim. You may be old by the time you are there. The salt may have lost half its savour.

No such dangers or doubt perplex the climber on rocks. He deals, day by day, with the Ultimate Good, no doubt in small nips, but still authentic and not watered down. His senses thrill with delight to find that he is just the sum of his own simple powers. He lives on, from moment to moment, by early man's gleeful achievement of balance on one foot out of four. He hangs safe by a single hand that learnt its good grip in fifty thousand years of precarious dodging among forest boughs, with the hungry snakes looking up from the ground for a catch, like the expectant fieldsmen in the slips. The next little ledge, the object of all human hope and desire, is only some twelve feet away—about the length of the last leap of that naked bunch of clenched and quivering muscles, from whom you descend, at the wild horse that he had stalked through the grass. Each time that you get up a hard pitch you have succeeded in life. Besides, no one can say you have hurt him.

Care will come back in the end: the clouds return after the rain; but for those first heavenly minutes of sitting secure and supreme at the top of Moss Ghyll or the Raven Crag Gully you are Columbus when he saw land from the rigging and Gibbon when he laid down his pen in the garden-house at Lausanne. It's good for you, too; it makes you more decent. No one, I firmly believe, could be utterly mean on the very tip of the Weisshorn. I could, if I had known the way, have written a lyric about these agreeable truths as I sat by myself in the tiny inn at Llyn Ogwen, where Telford's

great London-to-Holyhead road climbs over a pass between three-thousand-foot Carnedds and Glyders. I was a convalescent then, condemned still to a month of rest cure for body and mind. But it was June, and fine weather. Rocks had lately become dry and warm.

There are places in Britain where rock-climbing cannot honestly be called a rest cure. I mean, for the body. Look at the Coolin—all the way that a poor invalid must tramp from Sligachan southward before he gets among the rough, trusty, prehensile gabbro, the best of all God's stones. Think of Scawfell Crag, the finest crag in the world, but its base cut off from the inn by all that Sisyphean plod up the heart-breaking lengths of Brown Tongue. From Ogwen you only need walk half an hour, almost on the flat, and then—there you are, at the foot of your climb. The more I considered the matter, the more distinctly could I perceive that my doctor, when saying, "Avoid all violent exercise," meant that if ever I got such an opening as this for a little "steady six-furlong work," as it is called in the training reports, I ought to take care not to miss it.

But I was the only guest at the inn. And to climb alone is counted a sin against the spirit of the sport. All the early fathers of climbing held the practice heretical. Certainly some of them—Whymper, Tyndall, and others—climbed by themselves when they had a mind to. Thus did King David, on distinguished occasions, relax the general tensity of his virtue. But these exceptions could not obscure the general drift of the law and the prophets of mountaineering. Then came another pause-giving reflection. If, as the Greeks so delicately put it, anything incurable happens while you are climbing alone, your clay is exposed, defenceless and dumb, to nasty *obiter dicta* during the inquest. "Woe unto him," as Solomon says, "who is alone when he falleth!" Insensate rustic coroners and juries, well as they may understand that riding to hounds in a stone-wall country is one of the choicer forms of prudence, will prose and grumble over extinct

mountaineers. Their favourite vein is the undesirable one of their brother, the First Clown in *Hamlet*, who thought it a shame that Ophelia (she seems to have slipped up while climbing a tree) "should have countenance in this world to drown or hang herself, more than her even Christian."

No mean impediments these to a sensitive, conscientious nature's design for seeking health and joy among the attractive gullies and slabs that surround Llyn Idwal. Against them I marshalled all that I could remember of St Paul's slighting observations on the law; also any agility that I had gained in the Oxford Greats school in resolving disagreeable discords into agreeable higher harmonies. Black was certainly not white. Still, as the good Hegelian said, black might, after all, be an aspect of white. In time it was duly clear to my mind that sin lies not in the corporal act, but in the thoughts of the sinner. So long as the heart sincerely conversed with the beauty of the truths on which rested the rule of never climbing alone it mattered little what the mere legs did: your soul was not in your legs. One of casuistry's brightest triumphs had been fairly won, my liberty gained, my intellectual integrity saved, my luncheon sandwiches ordered for eight in the morning—when somebody else arrived at the inn.

He stood confessed a botanist—he had the large green cylindrical can of the tribe, oval in section and hung by a strap from the shoulder, like the traditional *vivandière's* little cask in French art. He was also, I found while we smoked through that evening together, a good fellow. He had, too, a good leg, if one only. The other was stiff and unbendable at the knee. He had broken it last year, he said, and the bones seemed to have set only too hard, or else Nature had gracelessly grudged to the mended knee-joint of her lover a proper supply of whatever substitute she uses for ball-bearings.

His name was Darwin. "No relation, really," he humbly assured me. His father was only some obscure squire. The son's Christian name had been Charles at the font, but on coming of age the dear fellow had felt it immodest to prey

any more than he need upon his eponymous hero's thrice-honoured names. So he had meekly converted the Charles by deed-poll into Thomas. This lowly and beautiful gesture convinced me, as you may suppose, that here was the man to go climbing with. He was indeed one of the innocent, one-thoughted kind that wake up happy each day and never turn crusty, and always think you are being too good to them.

One lure alone had drawn him to these outworks of Snowdon. Some eccentric flower grew on these heights, and a blank page in one of his books of squashed specimens ached for it. Was it so lovely? I asked, like a goose. He was too gentle to snub me. But all that fellow's thoughts shone out through his face. Every flower that blew—to this effect did his soul mildly rebuke mine—was beauteous beyond Helen's eyes. All he said was: "No, not fair, perhaps, to outward view as many roses be; but, just think!—it grows on no patch of ground in the world but these crags!"

"It is not merely better dressed," said I, "than Solomon. It is wiser."

It was about then, I think, that the heart of the man who had gone mad on the greenstuff and that of the man who knew what was what, in the way of a recreation, rushed together like Paolo's and Francesca's. What had already become an *entente cordiale* ripened at tropical speed into alliance. Darwin had found a second, half invalided perhaps, but still the holder of two unqualified legs, for to-morrow's quest of his own particular Grail. To me it now seemed to be no accident that Darwin had come to the inn: it was ordained, like the more permanent union of marriage, for a remedy against sin, and to avoid climbing alone.

We got down to business at once. A charming gully, I told him, led right up to the big crag over Cwm Idwal. Not Twll Du, the ill-famed Devil's Kitchen. That, I frankly said, was justly *detestata matribus*—wet and rotten and lethal, and quite another affair. Mine was the place for town children to spend a happy day in the country: the very place also for

starting the day's search for the object of Darwin's desire. In saying this, too, I was honest. Lots of plants grow in some gullies; ferns, mosses, grasses, all sorts of greens flourish in a damp cleft, like hair in an armpit; why not one kind of waste rabbit-food as well as another? You see, I had not been a casuist merely, before Darwin came. I had used the eyes heaven gave me, and reconnoitred the gully well from below, and if any flower knew how to tell good from bad, in the way of a scramble, it would be there. I ended upon a good note. The place's name, I said impressively, was Hanging Garden Gully, no doubt because of the rich indigenous flora.

His eyes shone at that, and we went straight to the kitchen to ask Mrs Jones for the loan of a rope. I had none with me that journey: the sick are apt to relinquish improvidently these necessaries of a perfect life. Now, in the classics of mountaineering the right thing in such cases of improvised enterprise is that the landlady lends you her second-best clothes-line. Far happier we, Mrs Jones having by her a 120-foot length of the right Alpine rope, with the red worsted thread in its middle. It had been left in her charge by a famous pillar of the Scottish Mountaineering Club till he should come that way again. "The gentleman," Mrs Jones told us, "said I was always to let any climbing gentlemen use it." Heaven was palpably smiling upon our attempt.

The sun smiled benedictively, too, on the halt and the sick as they stood, about nine the next morning, roping up at the foot of their climb. "A fisherman's bend," I took care to explain, as I knotted one end of the rope round Darwin's chest.

"The botanical name," he replied—"did I tell you?—is *Lloydia*." How some men do chatter when they are happy! Can't carry their beans.

We were not likely to need the whole 120 feet of the rope. So I tied myself on at its middle and coiled the odd 60 feet round my shoulder. "A double overhand knot," I confessed, as I tightened it round me. "A bad knot, but for once it may do us no harm."

"The vernacular name," said the garrulous fellow, "is spiderwort."

"Tut, tut!" I inwardly said.

The lower half of that gully was easier than it had looked: just enough in it to loosen your muscles and make you want more. Higher up, the gully grew shallow and had greater interest. The top part of all, as I remember it now, might be called either a chimney or crack, being both. In horizontal section it was a large obtuse angle indented into the face of the crag. The crag at this part, and the gully's bed with it, rose at an angle of some 60 degrees. Now when you climb rock at an angle of 60 degrees the angle seems to be just 90. In early mountaineering records the pioneers often say, "Our situation was critical. Above us the crag rose vertical," or, "To descend was impossible now. But in front the rocky face, for some time perpendicular, had now begun to overhang." If you take a clinometer to the scenes of some of those liberal estimates you blush for your kind. The slope of the steepest—and easiest—ridge of the three by which the Matterhorn is climbed is only 39 degrees. But this, though not purely digressive, is partly so. All that strictly had to be said was that an upright and very obtuse-angled trough in smooth rock that rises at 60 degrees cannot be climbed.

But in the very bed of our trough there had been eroded, from top to bottom, a deepish irregular crack in the rock. Into this crack, at most parts, you could stick a foot, a knee, or an arm. Also, the sides of the large obtuse angle, when you looked closely, were not utterly smooth. On the right wall, as we looked up, certain small wrinkles, bunions, and other minute but lovable diversities in the face of the stone gave promise of useful points of resistance for any right boot that might scrape about on the wall in the hope of exerting auxiliary lateral pressure, while the left arm and thigh, hard at work in the crack, wriggled you up by a succession of caterpillarish squirms. This delectable passage was 80 feet high, as I measured it with my experienced eye. An inexperienced

measuring-tape might have put it at fifty. To any new recruit to the cause—above all, to one with a leg as inflexible as the stoniest stone that it pressed—I felt that the place was likely to offer all that he could wish in the line of baptisms of fire. Still, as the pioneers said, to descend was impossible now: the crack was too sweet to be left. And Darwin, thus far, had come up like a lamplighter, really. I told him so, frankly. Alpine guides are the men at psychology. Do they not get the best out of the rawest new client, in any hard place, by ceasing to hide the high estimate that they have formed of his natural endowment for the sport? "*Vous êtes—je vous dis franchement, monsieur—un chamois! Un véritable chat de montagne!*"

I was leading the party. I was the old hand. Besides, I could bend both my knees. Desiring Darwin to study my movements, so that he presently might—so far as conformity would not cramp his natural talents—copy them closely, I now addressed myself to the crack. When half-way up I heard the voice of a good child enduring, with effort, a painful call upon its patience. "Any *Lloydia* yet?" it wistfully said. Between my feet I saw Darwin below. Well, he was certainly paying the rope out all right, as I had enjoined; but he did it "like them that dream." His mind was not in it. All the time he was peering hungrily over the slabby containing walls of the gully, and now he just pawed one of them here and there with a tentative foot—you know how a puppy, when first it sees ice, paws the face of the pond. "These botanists!" I thought. "These fanatics!" You know how during a happy physical effort—a race or a hunt, a fight or a game—you think, with a sort of internal quiet, about a lot of old things. There came back to my mind the old lines that I had once had to make Latin verse of:

> How vainly men themselves amaze
> To win the palm, the oak, or bays,
> And their incessant labours see
> Crowned from some single herb or tree.

Meanwhile I took a precaution. I first unroped myself. Then I passed the rope, from below, through the space behind a stone that was jammed fast in the crack. Then I roped myself on again, just at my old place on the rope. A plague of a job it was, too, with all those 60 feet of spare rope to uncoil and re-coil. But you see how it worked: I had now got the enthusiast moored. Between him and me the rope went through the eye of a needle, so I could go blithely on. I went. In the top of the crack I found a second jammed stone. It was bigger than number one: in fact, it blocked the way and made you clamber round outside it rather interestingly; but it, too, had daylight showing through a hole behind it. Sounds from below were again improving my natural stock of prudence. You can't, I thought, be too safe. Once more I unroped, just under this chockstone, and pushed the rope up through the hole at its back. When the rope fell down to me, outwards over the top of the stone, I tied on again, just as before, and then scrambled up over the outer side of the stone with an ecstatic pull on both arms, and sat on its top in the heaven that big-game hunters know when they lie up against the slain tiger and smoke.

If you have bent up your mind to take in the details, you will now have an imposing vision of the connections of Darwin and me with each other and with the Primary or Palæozoic rocks of Cambria. From Darwin, tied on to its end, the rope ran, as freely as a bootlace runs through the eyelets, behind the jammed stone 30 feet above his head, and then again behind my present throne of glory at the top; then it was tied on to me; and then there were 60 feet, half its length, left over to play with.

Clearly Darwin, not being a thread, or even a rope, could not come up the way that the rope did, through the two needle-eyes. Nor did I care, he being the thing that he was, to bid him untie and then to pull up his end of the rope through the eyes, drop it down to him clear through the air, and tell him to tie on again. He was, as the Irish say of the distraught,

"fit to be tied," and not at all fit for the opposite. If he were loose he might at any moment espy that Circe of his in some place out of bounds. There seemed to be only one thing to do. I threw down the spare 60 feet of the rope, and told him first to tie himself on to its end, and then, but not before, to untie himself from the other. I could not quite see these orders obeyed. A bulge of rock came between him and my eyes, but I was explicit. "Remember that fisherman's bend!" I shouted. Perhaps my voice was rather austere; but who would not forgive a wise virgin for saying, a little dryly, to one of the foolish, "Well, use your spare can"? As soon as he sang out "All right" I took a good haul on what was now the working half of the rope, to test his knot-making. Yes, he *was* all right. So I bade him come up, and he started. Whenever he looked up I saw that he had a wild, gadding eye; and whenever he stopped to breathe during the struggle he gasped, "I can't see it yet."

He came nearly half-way, and then he did see it. He had just reached the worst part. Oh, the Sirens know when to start singing! That flower of evil was far out of his reach, or of what his reach ought to have been. Some twelve feet away on his right it was rooted in some infinitesimal pocket of blown soil, a mere dirty thumbnailful of clay. For a moment the lover eyed the beloved across one huge slab of steep stone with no real foothold or handhold upon it—only a few efflorescent minutiæ small as the bubukles and whelks and knobs on the nose of some fossil Bardolph. The whole wall of the gully just there was what any man who could climb would have written off as unclimbable. Passion, however, has her own standards, beyond the comprehension of the wise:

> His eye but saw that light of love,
> The only star it hailed above.

My lame Leander gave one whinny of desire. Then he left all and made for his Hero.

You know the way that a man, who has no idea how badly

he bats, will sometimes go in and hit an unplayable bowler right out of the ground, simply because the batsman is too green to know that the bowler cannot be played. Perhaps that was the way. Or perhaps your sound climber, having his wits, may leave, at his boldest, a margin of safety, as engineers call it, so wide that a madman may cut quite a lot off its edge without coming surely to grief. Or was it only a joke of the gods among themselves over their wine? Or can it be that the special arrangements known to be made for the safety of sailors, when in their cups, are extended at times to cover the case of collectors overcome by the strong waters of the acquisitive instinct? Goodness knows! Whatever the powers that helped him, this crippled man, who had never tried climbing before, went skating off to his right flank, across that impossible slant, on one foot and one stilt, making a fool of the science of mountaineering.

I vetoed, I imprecated, I grew Athanasian. All utterly useless. As soon could you whistle a dog back to heel when he fleets off on fire with some fresh amour. I could only brace myself, take a good hold of the rope in both hands, and be ready to play the wild salmon below as soon as he slipped and the line ran out tight. While I waited I saw, for the first time, another piquant detail of our case. Darwin, absorbed in his greed, had never untied the other end of the rope. So he was now tied on to both ends. The whole rope made a circle, a vicious circle. Our whole caravan was sewn on to the bony structure of Wales with two big stitches, one at each jammed stone.

You see how it would work. When Darwin should fall, as he must, and hang in the air from my hands, gravitation would swing him back into the centre of the chimney, straight below me, bashing him hard against the chimney's opposite wall. No doubt he would be stunned. I should never be able to hoist his dead weight through the air to my perch, so I should have to lower him to the foot of the chimney. That would just use up the full 60 feet of rope. It would run

the two 60-foot halves of the rope so tight that I should never be able to undo the bad central knot that confined me. Could I but cut it when Darwin was lowered into provisional safety, and then climb down to see him! No; I had lost my knife two days ago. I should be like a netted lion, with no mouse to bite through his cords: a Prometheus, bound to his rock.

But life spoils half her best crises. That wretch never slipped. He that by this time had no sort of right to his life came back as he went, treading on air, but now with that one bloom of the spiderwort in his mouth. Apologizing for slowness, and panting with haste, he writhed up the crack till his head appeared over the chockstone beside me. Then he gave one cry of joy, surged up over the stone, purring with pleasure, and charged the steep slope of slippery grass above the precipice we had scaled. "You never told me!" he cried; and then for the first time I noticed that up here the whole place was speckled with *Lloydia*. The next moment Darwin fell suddenly backward as if Lloyd himself or some demon gardener of his had planted a very straight one on the chin of the onrushing trespasser in his pleasaunce. You guess? Yes. One of his two tethers, the one coming up from behind the lower jammed stone, had run out; it had pulled him up short as he leapt upon the full fruition of his desire.

He was easy to field as he rolled down the grass. But his tug on the rope had worked it well into some crevice between the lower jammed stone and the wall of the crack. We were anchored now, good and fast, to that stone, more than three fathoms below. What to do now? Climb down and clear the jammed rope? Leave that lame voluptuary rioting upon a precipice's edge? Scarcely wise—would it have been? Puzzled and angry, I cast away shame. I knew well that as Spartan troops had to come back with their shields or upon them, or else have trouble with their mothers, a climber who leaves his tackle behind in a retreat is likely to be a scorn and a hissing. Still, I cast away shame. Ours was no common case; no common ethics would meet it. I untied us both, and

threw both ends of the rope down the chimney; then I let Darwin graze for a minute; then I drove him relentlessly up the steep grass to the top of the crag, and round by the easy walking way down.

As we passed down the valley below I looked up. The whole length of our chimney was visibly draped with the pendant double length of that honest Scots mountaineer's rope. "I don't really know how to thank you enough," Darwin was babbling beside me, "for giving me such a day!"

But I felt as if I were one of the villains in plays who compromise women of virtue and rank by stealing their fans and leaving them lying about in the rooms of bad bachelors. Much might be said for climbing alone, no matter what the authorities thought. A good time it would be, all to myself, when I came back to salvage that rope.

From "Fiery Particles"

THE CATASTROPHE ON THE MATTERHORN, 1865

Edward Whymper

We started from Zermatt on July 13, at half-past five, on a brilliant and perfectly cloudless morning. We were eight in number—Croz (guide), old Peter Taugwalder (guide), and his two sons, Lord F. Douglas, Mr Hadow, Rev. Mr Hudson, and I. To ensure steady motion, one tourist and one native walked together. The youngest Taugwalder fell to my share The wine-bags also fell to my lot to carry, and throughout the day after each drink I replenished them secretly with water, so that at the next halt they were found fuller than before! This was considered a good omen, and little short of miraculous.

On the first day we did not intend to ascend to any great height, and we mounted accordingly very leisurely. Before

twelve o'clock we had found a good position for the tent, at a height of 11,000 feet. We passed the remaining hours of daylight—some basking in the sunshine, some sketching, some collecting; Hudson made tea, I coffee, and at length we retired, each one to his blanket-bag.

We assembled together before dawn on the 14th and started directly it was light enough to move. One of the young Taugwalders returned to Zermatt. In a few minutes we turned the rib which had intercepted the view of the eastern face from our tent platform. The whole of this great slope was now revealed, rising for 3000 feet like a huge natural staircase. Some parts were more, and others were less, easy, but we were not once brought to a halt by any serious impediment, for when an obstruction was met in front it could always be turned to the right or to the left. For the greater part of the way there was no occasion, indeed, for the rope, and sometimes Hudson led, and sometimes myself. At 6.20 we had attained a height of 12,800 feet, and halted for half an hour; we then continued the ascent without a break until 9.55, when we stopped for fifty minutes, at a height of 14,000 feet.

We had now arrived at the foot of that part which, seen from the Riffelberg, seems perpendicular or overhanging. We could no longer continue on the eastern side. For a little distance we ascended by snow upon the *arête*—that is, the ridge—then turned over to the right, or northern side. The work became difficult, and required caution. In some places there was little to hold; the general slope of the mountain was *less* than 40°, and snow had accumulated in, and had filled up, the interstices of the rock-face, leaving only occasional fragments projecting here and there. These were at times covered with a thin film of ice. It was a place which any fair mountaineer might pass in safety. We bore away nearly horizontally for about 400 feet, then ascended directly towards the summit for about 60 feet, then doubled back to the ridge which descends towards Zermatt. A long stride

round a rather awkward corner brought us to snow once more. The last doubt vanished! The Matterhorn was ours. Nothing but 200 feet of easy snow remained to be surmounted.

The higher we rose, the more intense became the excitement. The slope eased off, at length we could be detached, and Croz and I, dashing away, ran a neck-and-neck race, which ended in a dead heat. At 1.40 P.M. the world was at our feet, and the Matterhorn was conquered.

The others arrived. Croz now took the tent-pole and planted it in the highest snow. "Yes," we said, "there is the flag-staff, but where is the flag?" "Here it is," he answered, pulling off his blouse and fixing it to the stick. It made a poor flag, and there was no wind to float it out, yet it was seen all around. They saw it at Zermatt—at the Riffel—in the Val Tournanche. . . .

We remained on the summit for one hour—

One crowded hour of glorious life.

It passed away too quickly, and we began to prepare for the descent.

Hudson and I consulted as to the best and safest arrangement of the party. We agreed that it was best for Croz to go first, and Hadow second; Hudson, who was almost equal to a guide in sureness of foot, wished to be third; Lord Douglas was placed next, and old Peter, the strongest of the remainder, after him. I suggested to Hudson that he should attach a rope to the rocks on our arrival at the difficult bit, and hold it as we descended, as an additional protection. He approved the idea, but it was not definitely decided that it should be done.

The party was being arranged in the above order whilst I was sketching the summit, and they had finished and were waiting for me to be tied in line, when some one remembered that our names had not been left in a bottle. They requested me to write them down and moved off while it was being done.

A few minutes afterwards I tied myself to young Peter,

ran down after the others, and caught them just as they were commencing the descent of the difficult part. Great care was being taken. Only one man was moving at a time; when he was firmly planted the next advanced, and so on. They had not, however, attached the additional rope to rocks, and nothing was said about it. The suggestion was not made for my own sake, and I am not sure that it even occurred to me again. For some little distance we two followed the others, detached from them, and should have continued so had not Lord Douglas asked me, about 3 P.M., to tie on to old Peter, as he feared, he said, that Taugwalder would not be able to hold his ground if a slip occurred.

A few minutes later a sharp-eyed lad ran into the Monte Rosa Hotel, to Seiler, saying that he had seen an avalanche fall from the summit of the Matterhorn on to the Matterhorn glacier. The boy was reproved for telling idle stories; he was right, nevertheless, and this was what he saw.

Michel Croz had laid aside his axe, and in order to give Mr Hadow greater security was absolutely taking hold of his legs, and putting his feet, one by one, into their proper positions. As far as I know, no one was actually descending. I cannot speak with certainty, because the two leading men were partially hidden from my sight by an intervening mass of rock, but it is my belief, from the movements of their shoulders, that Croz, having done as I have said, was in the act of turning round to go down a step or two himself; at this moment Mr Hadow slipped, fell against him, and knocked him over. I heard one startled exclamation from Croz, then saw him and Mr Hadow flying downwards; in another moment Hudson was dragged from his steps, and Lord Douglas immediately after him. All this was the work of a moment. Immediately we heard of Croz's exclamation, old Peter and I planted ourselves as firmly as the rocks would permit; the rope was taut between us, and the jerk came on us both as on one man. We held; but the rope broke midway between Taugwalder and Lord Francis Douglas. For a few

seconds we saw our unfortunate companions sliding downwards on their backs, and spreading out their hands, endeavouring to save themselves. They passed from our sight uninjured, disappeared one by one, and fell from precipice to precipice on to the Matterhorn glacier below, a distance of nearly 4000 feet in height. From the moment the rope broke it was impossible to help them. So perished our comrades! . . .

For more than two hours afterwards I thought almost every moment that the next would be my last, for the Taugwalders, utterly unnerved, were not only incapable of giving assistance, but were in such a state that a slip might have been expected from them at any moment. After a time we were able to do that which should have been done at first, and fixed rope to firm rocks, in addition to being tied together. These ropes were cut from time to time, and were left behind. Even with their assurance the men were afraid to proceed, and several times old Peter turned, with ashy face and faltering limbs, and said with terrible emphasis, "*I cannot.*"

About 6 P.M. we arrived at the snow upon the ridge descending towards Zermatt, and all peril was over. We frequently looked, but in vain, for traces of our unfortunate companions; we bent over the ridge and cried to them, but no sound returned. Convinced at last that they were neither within sight nor hearing, we ceased from our useless efforts, and, too cast down for speech, silently gathered up our things, and the little effects of those who were lost, and then completed the descent.[1]

From "Scrambles amongst the Alps"
(abridged)

[1] The body of Lord Douglas, who was a youth of nineteen, has never been found. It probably lodged upon some inaccessible shelf in the face of the mighty precipice. The three other victims fell nearly 4000 feet, and their bodies lay together upon the glacier when found by Whymper and the other searchers the next morning. Their graves are beside the little church in Zermatt.

A MEMORY

Guido Rey

I was descending from the Theodul. Half-way between the Col and the Jomein I saw coming up towards me a fine, tall old man, with a ruddy countenance, clean-shaven, clear-eyed, and with snow-white hair. His face bore the impress of an iron will; his body, straight as a dart notwithstanding his years, was full of vigour; his long, rhythmical gait testified to his familiarity with mountains. As I passed him, I took off my hat to him, as is the polite custom of those who meet in the mountains. He returned my bow and passed on. My guide had stopped to talk to his. When he rejoined me he whispered, "Do you know who that is?" I answered that I did not. "Monsieur Whymper!" and he pronounced the name in a tone of respect. I was as much moved as if I were in the presence of a ghost. I had never seen Whymper except in photographs. I at once turned round to look at him. He had stopped too, and was looking at the Matterhorn, whose aspect was one of marvellous grandeur from this point.

I cannot describe how much I was impressed by that meeting in that spot. It was not a man I saw, but the idealised image of the perfect mountaineer, whom I and others had so often dreamed of imitating. They were there, the Matterhorn and Whymper, the two great rivals, and the sight of them in each other's presence brought home to one the superiority of the tiny conqueror to the conquered giant. He had come back after thirty years to see the mountain that had made him famous. He found none of his former comrades there. Croz lay at Zermatt, Carrel at Valtournanche; only the Matterhorn stood unchangeable, everlasting. He was looking at it and perhaps recalling the deeds of daring he had performed on the stubborn peak in the vigour of his youthful years.

I watched, without his noticing it, and with a kind of veneration, that man who had not feared the Matterhorn when the Matterhorn was a mystery, and who loved it still, though the crowd had made it commonplace. I saw his snow-white hair flowing beneath the brim of his grey felt hat, and it seemed to me that it must have begun to turn white on the terrible day of victory and disaster. I myself was harrowed by the thought of what he must have suffered on that day and afterwards. The Matterhorn had cost him dear! It was not, however, the struggle with the mountain that had saddened him, but the contests with his fellow-men which followed his victory.

I would fain have made some sign, have shown him some act of reverence, some proof of my sympathetic interest; have told him that I had read his book again and again, that it had done me good because it had brought me also up into those places. I would have told him that I understood and shared his passion; that I also, though speaking a different language from his, was a worshipper of the mountain for which he had done and suffered so much; have cried out to him that I too had attempted new ways up the mountain, and that I had not succeeded; have asked him for his iron will that I might try again some day and be successful, and be able to write and tell him that I also had in some measure conquered the Matterhorn.

Whymper started again and slowly continued his ascent, and I was left with my wish unsatisfied. But I too shall return in my old age to the foot of the Matterhorn. I shall struggle up step by step, leaning on my now useless axe, to these dear haunts, seeking comfort in the contemplation of the familiar peaks. I shall enjoy the final pleasure of Alpine life, the cool spring that quenches thirst, the refreshing cup of warm milk, the colour of a little flower, a breath of the wholesome odour of pines wafted up by the winds from the neighbouring forest, the silvery sound of bells which rises in the evening from the peaceful pastures. On the way I shall

find my old guides, once my companions in the happy days of strenuous effort, and I shall stop to talk with them, and to recall old memories.

Seated on the hotel terrace in the pleasant mountain sunshine I shall look out down the valley, over the long basin of the Breuil, for the arrival of parties of climbers. Young men will appear full of courage and hope. Perhaps Fasano, the faithful waiter at the Jomein, will point me out to them and say: "That gentleman over there was a great climber in his day; he has passed many a night up on the mountain here!" The young men will look at me incredulously while I shall straighten my bent back, at the prompting of my last shreds of vanity; and I shall take aside those who are kind enough to listen to me, and bare my arm like a veteran of many battles, to show them secretly an old wound received up in the mountains, and shall encourage them to make attempts and exhort them to be prudent. Then I shall be content if I note in them traces of the emotion I felt the first time I saw the Matterhorn.

From "The Matterhorn"

THE MATTERHORN

Guido Rey

FROM the window of my room in the Monte Rosa Hotel at Zermatt I can see the Matterhorn. Lightly veiled by the mists which rise from the valley in the afternoon heat, the mountain takes on so aerial an appearance, so transparent a tint, that it looks unnaturally high and distant; it resembles a cloud, or a cone of light smoke, rather than a rock. My glance descends upon the modest tower of the church near the hotel, the old tower with its pointed gable and its cleft wooden top, through which one can see the little bells. It was they that rang for the funeral of Croz. Croz

lies in the peaceful cemetery in the shadow of the church. "He lost his life not far from this spot," says the inscription carved on a headstone; "he died like a brave man and a faithful guide." Not far from him lie side by side two of his employers, Hudson and Hadow.

That little plot of soil which contains, together with other victims of the mountains, the first victims of the Matterhorn, fills me with deep emotion every time I visit it; I think of the eternal peace which has followed upon the hours of fierce struggle; I grieve for these young men torn so early in their lives from the enjoyment of their noble pleasures, and then I wonder whether it were not a blessed thing to die as they died, quickly, unexpectedly, painlessly, in a moment of perfect peace, when life seemed full of beauty, and the mind was purified by passion and by joy.

From "The Matterhorn"

PEN-PICTURES

Walter Larden

I. The Old and the New

JUNE 21ST [1895] found us walking over the Krieg-alp pass to Devero; and for the second time—but not the last—I passed a night in the quaint little inn.

Alas, that its day is past! There is a new inn, up to date; it has a *salon*, *table d'hôte*, a *chef*, even a bathroom. But I regret, I miss, the little old inn.

I admit that it *might* have been dirty; but it wasn't. There might have been fl—s, but there weren't. The pigs which rambled about outside might have inconvenienced us, but they didn't; kitchen and guest-room were on the first floor, and the stairs baffled these animals so inquisitive, so lacking in the courtesy of unobtrusiveness; just a step from the yard

and we soared above them and became inaccessible. The bedrooms were even higher, and quite clean.

Up the stairs one found a sort of stone landing, that *was* the kitchen; so it seems to my memory now. A huge Devonshire fireplace, a great cauldron hanging over the wood fire, a picturesque old woman tending the crock and the fire, some withered old crony sitting opposite; a *curé*, a peasant or two; our shabby old landlord, always wearing his older hat—the richest man in the valley they said; things hanging up to dry or smoke; bunches of herbs;—such is my remembrance of the kitchen of the little old inn.

Compare this with the kitchen of the new hotel, just like that of any Swiss hotel; a square room with a sort of iron altar in it from which horrible gravy smells (visible to the eye as smoke) ascend; a man-cook in a dirty linen cap hired for six weeks only;—the whole thing obviously got up for the season, no touch of the country about it.

And then the meals at our little old inn, in the primitive old guest-room. We mention coffee; merely an allusion to it, as something pleasant; something perhaps even suitable when one has come over a pass. A little later our host (in his hat) wanders timidly in and puts down a cup—it may be two or even three cups; spoons, saucers, and a plate or so follow. Then sugar, in the queer little bits to be found in poor overtaxed Italy. Bread, old but good; and finger biscuits like lighting spills. And finally the coffee, real, fragrant coffee, and hot as hot can be.

In the new hotel, in Swiss hotels in general, I have but rarely tasted tolerable black coffee, and it is seldom hot. It is usually made of charcoal, and kept warm all the season.

We have dinner as the sun gets lower (I don't think they had clocks in the little old hotel); soup with macaroni in it, omelette—quite enough to eat. We ask for wine, and our landlord wanders down to the cellar below and sadly but hospitably opens two or three bottles for us, to see if there is

anything we like. He does not charge for what we do not choose. In the little old hotel I have had coffee, dinner with wine, breakfast, and food and wine to take with me, and have been charged six francs in all. I could never have believed that my memory could have retained such kindly, such regretful recollections of any inn in a foreign land as it does of that little old hotel.

II. Champéry

[1902] Sundays were interesting days.

In the week-time the men looked as Swiss mountain men usually do, unpicturesque and perhaps rather dirty. The women were decidedly ungainly in their masculine dress (the wearing of this on their part is a custom of that valley) in which the unsuitability of the female figure for man's attire is there unnecessarily emphasised by the absence of anything in the way of a loose sheltering jacket. Little need as a rule for the brilliant red cap that they wear to distinguish them from the men; the narrow shoulders, wide hips, and lumbering gait betray them from afar.

But on Sundays the men show up well in their brown homespun suits, white collars, and shirt-fronts, and wide brown felt hats. And the women have a most tasteful dress, and very pretty hats of straw. Those who have seen such a collection of Swiss peasants on Sunday cannot but regret the custom, or rather the total lack of customs, that clothes our peasantry on Sundays in badly made *bourgeois* coats, and bowler hats (at best a hideous head-covering) sold off cheaply because out of fashion.

III. Ski-ing

[1902] That winter I had a short time at Davos, and devoted eight days to adding to my stock of "Pleasures of Life" one not mentioned by Sir John Lubbock. For, though now middle-aged, I ventured to begin *ski-ing*.

Ski-ing at Davos, I found myself among a new race of people. To them a mountain was a "thing to come down"; to me it still remained a "thing to go up."

Certainly it is a wonderful sport, and the pleasures that it can give are perhaps, at the time, keener than any experienced in ordinary mountaineering. But I do not think that it can to at all the same degree fill the life, influence character, or cement friendships. I am a loyal mountaineer still. . . .

[1907] A book might well be written on a winter at such a place as Adelboden; I will not attempt it. Nor will I attempt to describe at length the art of ski-ing, nor the delights (*and* dangers) of tours on ski. . . .

Speaking generally of all places above a certain level (and I think that it will be quite accurate enough if I call this 3000 feet, or more, above the sea) I may say that in Switzerland winter covers valley, forest, hill, and high mountain of not too steep slope, with a deep layer of snow. Clear skies and a glorious sun are the rule, and all nature has a splendid beauty that, save for a certain monotony of whiteness, transcends the beauty of summer. But to men on foot this world is practically forbidden; for the cold is such that in general the snow does not become compacted, and all wandering from the few beaten sleigh-tracks or roads is very heavy work.

Canadian snow-shoes or Swiss raquets enable one to plod laboriously further afield; but, until the Norwegian *ski* were introduced, the winter world of the hills remained practically untrodden. These ski are strips of wood, some six to seven feet long and three inches broad, running to a point and curved up at the front end; and their enormous advantage over all other snow-shoes lies in the fact that, when once a height is gained, the descent may be made at any pace you please. You shoot down, gliding; you do not walk down as on raquets.

Day after day would we start off along some forest path, then mount between the dark trees, make our way over alps

with gliding steps, and lunch in the balcony of some part-buried chalet above the limit of the forests, basking in the sun. Then followed the winding or zigzag route up to some hill-summit 7000, 8000, or 9000 feet above the sea; and then rest, not unaccompanied by a pipe, while we made out one by one the giants of the big mountain groups. And then the descent; the crown of the day's pleasures! Like birds on the wing we swooped, we curved, the keen air rushing past us; alp, chalet, and forest rose to meet us again; and once more we gained the forest path down which we now slid warily; and then a more leisurely progress along the road brought us home satisfied and hungry.

But sometimes one feels more ambitious, and longs to try something big; or at any rate big as a winter climb. There are risks, and there may be discomforts. But to attain the summit of a 'peak' is something to have achieved; and *if the snow be good* (the doubtful point high up) the run down surpasses anything experienced in the ordinary expeditions.

IV. A Legend

[1901] I set off on foot for Binn. Much of the way I walked with a youngish priest of decidedly superior stamp—many are mere peasants—named Father Schmid. *En route* Schmid told me many things.

One was the story of the Mazze.

In old days, when the people were oppressed by robber barons (or the like), they sometimes turned on them desperately. They met, and one carried a head, carved in wood and painted, of sorrowful aspect. (A carved and painted wooden head can easily look depressed.)

It was questioned: "What ails thee, Mazze? Does any oppress thee? Is it such-an-one?" If the name were wrong, the head was shaken.

When the right name was suggested, the head was nodded. "Then I will aid thee, Mazze," said one and another; and

each drove a nail into the head to make it feel sure of help (!).

When it had gone round, the sworn ones made for the castle of the culpable baron (or knight) and demolished it; demolished the baron too.[1]

v. Peasant Life in Switzerland

Here at Evoléne, I chanced to witness two weddings; and the beauty of the commune was there. I was struck more than ever with the contrast between the overworked and poorly fed mountain girls, and those who do comparatively light work in hotels and live well on *table d'hôte* food. Here were the flower of the former class, as their faces showed; but all were high-shouldered, as flat-chested as boys, and awkward in movement. If you want to know how injuriously hard the mountain life is, do not look at the young men in Sunday dress clustered round the church porch, but at the women of twenty-five or thirty; and even more perhaps at the stupefied, dirty, red-eyed spectres of old or elderly people whom you can find left in the chalets of a mountain-side while the workers are afield. This last is a tragic sight. There is nothing that I have seen in English agricultural life to approach the hardships so patiently borne by the mountain Swiss. (I do not, of course, speak of destitution, but of the life under *normal* conditions.) Romance! Have you seen women staggering up the steep slopes with loads of liquid manure carried in

[1] From W. D. McCrackan's *Rise of the Swiss Republic* (the extract refers to a date a few years after 1403):

"The Lords of Rarogne . . . abused their power and influence to such an extent that the people of the Valais were constrained once more to take up arms in self-defence. On this occasion the patriots brought into play an old custom, which consisted in carrying from village to village a wooden club as a symbol of revolt. This Mazze, as it was called, from the Italian *mazza*, a club, had carved upon it a human face in agony, to express violated justice, and was deposited before the residence of the Lord of Rarogne."

huge vessels on their backs—loads that few of us would care to carry twenty yards—and tipping the filthy stuff over their shoulders to fertilize the pasture for next summer?

From "Recollections of an Old Mountaineer"

EPITAPH

W. F. D.
1888

D. W. Freshfield

WHITE Soul, in lands of purer light
Who caught the secrets of the snow,
For you no priest performed the rite,
No hireling led the funeral show,
Lost on the far Caucasian height,
We know not how, content to know
The guardian stars their watches keep,
The mountain walls their ward extend,
Where Nature holds in quiet sleep
Her own interpreter and friend.

From "The Exploration of the Caucasus"

THE FINDING OF DONKIN'S LAST BIVOUAC

D. W. Freshfield

THE crags beside the glacier having yielded us no traces, we felt that the next step was to go to the pass itself, where we might look for a stone-man, and possibly a record. But we were fully occupied with the practical details of climbing and in no immediate expectation of any discovery, when about noon the leader, at the rope's end, suddenly

stopped short, and gasped out," *Herr Gott!* the sleeping-place!"

Before our eyes rose a low wall of large loose stones, built in the form of a semicircle with its convex side to the precipice below, and enclosing a shelf on the face of the cliffs, some six feet across in either direction, and partially overhung and sheltered by a projecting cave of rock. In a moment we were all overlooking the wall. The first object to catch my eyes was a black stew-pan, half full of water, in which a metal drinking-cup floated. A revolver in its case hung under the rocks. The space inside the wall and between it and the overhanging crag was filled with snow and ice to a depth of several feet. The hard-frozen surface was broken here and there by projecting portions of rucksacks and sleeping-bags. The bags were not empty. A momentary shudder passed through more than one mind: "How are they filled?" But a second glance showed us that there was no terrible discovery to be feared—terrible because it would have meant a lingering fate to our friends. Everything was there—most things at least—except themselves. That they were lost we had long known; yet this sudden discovery of their personal belongings, just as they had left them eleven months before, the consciousness that we stood on their last halting-place, sent a fresh thrill through every heart. Even in the common haunts of men familiar relics move us. How much more so when found in solitudes, which have seen no previous visitors except those whom they hide somewhere in their icy caverns. Surrounded by so many memorials of the missing, so many objects that spoke of individual traits of character and habit, it was difficult to believe in the catastrophe. It almost seemed natural to expect that our friends might at any moment be seen coming quickly over the crags to regain the bivouac where all still lay exactly as when they quitted it for their last climb.

After the first keen moments of discovery, the necessary work of digging out relics and searching for records was set

about in earnest. It was no light task, for on this sunward shelf the snow had often melted and frozen again. The bags were embedded in hard ice mixed with stones, against which our axes often rang ineffectually. The little camp hung like an eagle's nest, on the edge of a cliff of at least 1000 feet. Any object, such as the still well-stocked meat-bag, thrown over its wall fell vertically for some fifty feet into the lesser snow-gully, and then slid swiftly to the level snows far below. Space allowed only three men to work at once inside the wall; outside it no step could be taken without the greatest caution, and Powell found with difficulty a tiny ledge, whence he could safely sketch the eyrie.

We carefully pulled to pieces the little stone-man on the pass, but found no record within it. We then rebuilt it, and inserted a memorandum of our visit. The scene we looked on as we lingered on the rocks beside it was strangely beautiful and impressive. The silence of the upper snows was broken only by the constant ring of the axes and the voices of our comrades, which rose clearly through the thin air as they still laboured in their sad task of seeking all that might be found under the icy coverlet. Their figures were thrown out on the edge of the crags against the surface of the Tiutiun snowfields, as are those of sailors on a masthead against the sea, when seen from some high cliff. The day was cloudless, the air crystalline, space was for a moment annihilated or shown in a scale by which we each seemed to stand, not six feet, but 14,000 feet high! The many passes and heights of the central ridge of the Caucasus lay literally at our feet. We looked over them and past the clustered peaks and vast snow-reservoirs of the Adai Khokh group to innumerable indefinite distances, amongst which I recognised the horn of Shoda; green heights of Racha, blue mountains of Achalzich, opalescent Armenian ranges fading into a saffron sky, on which hung the far-off amber cloudlets which often mark the position of Ararat. Every detail was distinct as on a map man's model, yet the whole was vast and vague, wondering and

strange, creating an impression of immeasurable shining space, of the Earth as it might first appear to a visitant from some other planet. The splendour of nature on this day of days seemed not out of harmony with the sadness of our errand. It affected the mind as a solemn and sympathetic Music. While I gazed, four white butterflies circled round the little monument, and again fluttered off. An ancient Greek would have found a symbol in the incident.

From "The Exploration of the Caucasus"

MY PRIVATE ALPS

Alasdair Alpin MacGregor

I AM quite convinced that long, long ago my ancestors were dwellers among the wilds of the mountains, for at times I have an almost insatiable yearning for the hills. Indeed, they always enchanted me; and, when a small child in a remote part of the Highlands, I loved them so dearly that I carefully selected the mountains which appealed to me most. And since that time I have reserved them strictly for my own private thoughts and fitful dreams. Of course I visit them at odd intervals in order to make certain that everything there is as it ought to be.

They are my very own private Alps; and they lie in the beautiful county of Ross, where a sea of many moods sweeps unceasingly beneath them.

My private Alps are unlike all other Alps in the world. No (vulgar) tourists scatter wealth and orange-peel about them to disturb their peace and comeliness; and no motor-cars and charabancs dash madly through them. It is merciful that there is not a fashionable hotel within a hundred miles; and, in fact, one is obliged to tramp many weary miles on foot to reach them, for no electric trains with gorgeous saloons ascend *my* Alps.

Winter in my Alps. The great pine-trees and larches of my Alps sweep down the mountain-side to the very edges of my mirrored lochs; and, when the hills are bathed in snow and my mountain-streams are cased in a cold pure ice that is as clear as crystal, multitudes of pretty creatures take shelter within the peaceful aisles of my forests—conies and squirrels and many birds. Indeed, there are even wild cats, and foxes in my forests; and the blue wood-pigeons, that coo nightly in my larch-tree dovecots, are my emblem of love and of winter peace. And over my tall pine-tree tops the cold winds sough, and make a sound as of some one sighing afar off.

There are any number of deer in my territory; and they trail silently down from the mountains at dawn to drink of my shadowy pools, and to search for food where the snows may lie not. In my Alps there are also snowy eagles; and they guard my mountain-crags like snow-clad sentinels in the dead of winter.

My Alps in Summer. But it is not until summer that my Alps are arrayed as even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed, for in the sunshine of summer they are covered with diverse patterns wrought in blue and purple and gold. It is then that my little rills, which trickle down them, glisten like caskets of many precious jewels. The heather-bell is in full bloom; and the bees of a thousand hives drowse idly among my moors. Beside my streams cool, fresh water-cresses grow; and on the face of my lochs water-lilies spread themselves among the reeds wherein the wild duck hide. It is there my dragonflies unfold their delicate, flimsy wings, and flutter gaily through the sunlight.

In the distance I can see the green-lit Hebrides, as they loom across the western seas. And at eventide my tarns are stained like the great windows of coloured glass; and the clouds of a sunset sky drift over them like some magic panorama.

My Alps are immune from the ruthlessness of modern quasi-sportsmen. They are a sanctuary for bird and for beast,

because they are too far out of the way to offer any temptation to the cruel stalker of stags and the relentless destroyer of grouse and pheasant. It is here that as yet the professional, money-grabbing ornithologist is unknown; and neither snarers nor trappers visit my Alps in their eagerness to hunt and to kill.

Night in my Alps. And when the sun has sunk low beneath the hills, and when darkness has crept around all these pretty things and filled them with the drowsiness of night, there is not a cheep to be heard except, perhaps, the peevish call of the green-hooded lapwing on the lonely moor, for, as I have already told you, no human creature comes nigh.

From "Behold the Hebrides!"

THE ACCIDENT ON MONT BLANC

C. E. Mathews

On September 5, 1870, a caravan of eleven persons departed from Chamonix to make the ascent of Mont Blanc. Three of the party were tourists; Messrs Randall and Bean, Americans, and Mr George Corkindale, a Scotch gentleman; there were three guides and five porters. The cabin on the Grands-Mulets was reached that day; the ascent was resumed early the next morning, September 6. The day was fine and clear, and the movements of the party were observed through the telescopes of Chamonix; at two o'clock in the afternoon they were seen to reach the summit. A few minutes later they were seen making the first steps of the descent; then a cloud closed around them and hid them from view.

Eight hours passed, the cloud still remained, night came, no one had returned to the Grands-Mulets. Sylvain Couttet, keeper of the cabin there, suspected a misfortune, and sent down to the valley for help. A detachment of guides went

up, and by the time they had made the tedious trip and reached the cabin, a raging storm had set in. They had to wait; nothing could be attempted in such a tempest.

The wild storm lasted *more than a week*, without ceasing; but on the 17th, Couttet, with several guides, left the cabin and succeeded in making the ascent. In the snowy wastes near the summit they came upon five bodies, lying upon their sides in a reposeful attitude, which suggested that possibly they had fallen asleep there, while exhausted with fatigue and hunger, and benumbed with cold, and never knew when death stole upon them. Couttet moved a few steps farther and discovered five more bodies. The eleventh corpse—that of a porter—was not found, although diligent search was made for it.

In the pocket of Mr Bean, one of the Americans, was found a notebook in which had been pencilled some sentences, which admit us, in flesh and spirit, as it were, to the presence of these men during their last hours of life, and to the grisly horrors which their fading vision looked upon and their failing consciousness took cognizance of:

> *Tuesday, Sept.* 6. I have made the ascent of Mont Blanc, with ten persons—eight guides, and Mr Corkindale and Mr Randall. We reached the summit at half-past two. Immediately after quitting it, we were enveloped in clouds of snow. We passed the night in a grotto hollowed in the snow, which afforded but poor shelter, and I was ill all night.
>
> *Sept.* 7. *Morning.* The cold is excessive. The snow falls heavily and without interruption. The guides take no rest.
>
> *Evening.* My Dear Hessie, we have been two days on Mont Blanc, in the midst of a terrible hurricane of snow, we have lost our way, and are in a hole scooped in the snow, at an altitude of 15,000 feet. I have no longer any hope of descending.

They had wandered around, and around, in that blinding snowstorm, hopelessly lost, in a space only a hundred yards square; and when cold and fatigue vanquished them at last, they scooped their cave and lay down there to die by inches,

unaware that five steps more would have brought them into the true path. They were so near to life and safety as that, and did not suspect it! The thought of this gives the sharpest pang that the tragic story conveys.

The author of the *Histoire du Mont Blanc* introduces the closing sentences of Mr Bean's pathetic record thus:

> Here the characters are large and unsteady; the hand which traces them is become chilled and torpid; but the spirit survives, and the faith and resignation of the dying man are expressed with a sublime simplicity.
>
> > Perhaps this notebook will be found and sent to you. We have nothing to eat, my feet are already frozen, and I am exhausted; I have strength to write only a few words more. I have left means for C.'s education; I know you will employ them wisely. I die with faith in God and with loving thoughts of you. Farewell to all. We shall meet again, in Heaven.... I think of you always.

It is the way of the Alps to deliver death to their victims with a merciful swiftness, but here the rule failed. These men suffered the bitterest death that has been recorded in the history of those mountains, freighted as that history is with grisly tragedies.

From "The Annals of Mont Blanc"

THE ASCENT OF ILLIMANI

Sir Martin Conway

BEFORE two o'clock the next morning we had left camp and were winding our way up in the darkness among great yawning crevasses. A single candle in a pocket-lantern was our only light in the great solitude of the abode of snow. Fifteen miles away, across the valley of the Le Paz River, another twinkling light was visible, shining through the window of a remote farmhouse. That was our sole link with the world of men. The night was not

cold (only 21° Fahr.) but the snow was hard as rock and we made rapid progress. Once Guillen fell into a crevasse, but being roped, we pulled him out unhurt. The stars were shining in the clear sky and there was no trace of cloud to be seen, yet at frequent intervals weird flashes of electricity broke around us, unaccompanied by any sound, as though a searchlight had been flickered over us from some distant lighthouse. Whence these flashes came and whither they went I could not perceive. They resembled rather an emanation from a snowfield, or a phosphorescence glimmering along its surface, come and gone in the twinkling of an eye. The old moon rising over the snowfield at length rendered the lantern superfluous. Mounting steadily upward we approached the watershed ridge, and two and a half hours from camp stood upon it, the very crest of the Cordillera Real, and looked down an appalling precipice of at least 14,000 feet into the black depths of some valley of fertile Yungas. It was still night. Gloom enveloped us. Blanched snow and black crags appeared dim and ghostly near at hand, but the dim and vague horror of that almost fathomless plunge into the dark gulf at our feet was one of the experiences that it has been worth living to know.

During all this part of our ascent there had been on our left a great mountain exactly between us and Illimani; I called it the Pico del Indio, for a reason to be presently explained. We knew that a snow-plateau lay between it and Illimani, and we had hoped to gain this plateau by passing round the back of the Pico del Indio. Now, however, we learned to our regret that the tremendous Yungas cliff rendered any such circumvention impossible, while the corresponding cliff on the Cotaña side equally prohibited a turning movement. This intervening peak must be climbed over, and we must begin by going up the steep and narrow ridge on which we were then standing—no easy matter, as we could see even through the gloom of the night.

A boss of hard, transparent ice, the size and shape of a

walrus, stuck out of the ridge and had first to be surmounted. Steps were cut in it with much deliberation, and we raised ourselves to the crest above, one foot over the fathomless precipice, the other on a steep slope with a gaping crevasse a few yards down. Slip which way we might, it would be sudden destruction, and to slip was easy in this darkness and cold. The last stride was about as theatrical a performance as I can remember, for the ice even in the steps was as slippery as a frozen pond.

Here Guillen decided to turn back. He said his curiosity was satisfied, and he had a pain in his foot. It turned out to arise from frost-bite, for the cold up here was intense, probably twenty degrees lower than it had been down at camp. How Guillen got down alone I don't know, but he went; and he arrived the same day in safety at Caimbaya, to our no small relief, and advantage too, as will appear.

Above the boss of ice were steep rocks, up which we felt our way in the darkness, for the moon was now gone behind clouds. Farther up the ridge an enormous ice cornice barred the way, and could neither be circumvented nor climbed over, as dawn enabled us to ascertain. There was no alternative but to cross the whole steep south face of the Pico del Indio to a gap in the ridge on the other side, by which, as we knew, access to the high snow-plateau could be attained. The face was a great slope of ice, fortunately covered by a thin layer of well-frozen snow that adhered firmly to it, and into which steps could be cut. But for the film of snow the traverse, which occupied over two hours, would have taken four or five hours, and been infinitely dangerous into the bargain.

The day was at hand. All along the crest of the mountains and clouds in the east flamed the crimson glory of the coming sun. The brighter illumination only served to make more plain the solemnity and splendour of our surroundings. The ice-slope itself was one of the steepest I have ever stood on. A few hundred feet below it was cut off into a vertical cliff, overhanging in places, and by its feet lay the piled ruins of

the ice avalanches which often fall from it. There must be no slipping here. The day increased, the sun came, and we slowly advanced; but how slowly the distance diminished between us and the western ridge I cannot describe. *Click*, *click*, *click*, went the axe, hewing out a step with painstaking care. Each had to be large and well shaped. It was hard work. Half-way across, Maquignaz fell behind, and Pellissier took his place. Little was said. The steps were made as far apart as was safe, and the stride from one to another was an effort. At last the desired saddle was gained, and we could throw ourselves down and rest awhile, more than 20,000 feet above the sea, with the culminating peaks of Illimani now full in sight, rising beyond the snow-plateau, of whose existence we had been assured, but which we now first saw—a vast, unbroken, undulating expanse, waving away to four snow-white peaks and the saddles between them. The highest peak was right opposite, and the way to it was obvious; we must gain the saddle beside it, and then follow a snow-ridge to the top, the saddle in question being the depression visible from La Paz immediately to the left of the highest summit.

After a few minutes' contented rest we descended a gentle snow-slope of about 400 feet to the level of the plateau. The Pico del Indio was behind us and Illimani ahead. By rare luck the snow was in good condition, so that we scarcely sank into it at all. Over large areas it was hard as a wooden floor. Now, of course, we felt, as any man must feel at such an elevation, the weakening effect of diminished atmospheric pressure. We had no headaches, nausea, running of blood from nose and ears, or other violent symptoms, but all were greatly reduced in strength. When the long, slow ascent beyond the plateau began, the light load that strong Pellissier had to carry was almost too much for him. The remainder of the ascent was a featureless grind, and all suffered severely. Puffs of wind brought occasional relief. There was not a crevasse, scarcely an inequality of surface to vary the way. The rounded snow summits shut off distant views, and were

not interesting objects to look at in themselves. After three hours of slow, continuous plodding, the inclination ceased, and we stood upon a flat wide saddle, from where there fell away at our feet the steep descent facing La Paz. We threw ourselves down for a few moments to rest and eat. We were nearly 21,000 feet above the sea. For view there was behind us the great plateau, with snow-ridges to left and right, leading up to white peaks; ahead a tumbled cataract of ice seen through gaps of changeful clouds, with now and then a glimpse over the wide Bolivian desert far away to north and west.

The ascent recommenced. Slowly, very slowly, we mounted the wide and easy snow-ridge, conscious only of heart-breaking toil and entirely possessed by a fixed determination to get the work done. The lifting of each foot in its turn was a tragic effort. Presently everything became unreal and dreamlike. I fell into a semi-comatose condition, but plodded on all the same. Twice I came to myself with a start; I had been walking in something very like sleep. One apparent summit was succeeded by another, but the true one came at last. "*Monsieur, à vous la gloire*," said Maquignaz, as he moved aside for me to stand upon the highest point of snow. The altitude was 21,200 feet. It was half an hour before noon. The moment was one of satisfaction in that our toil ceased; but we had no sense of triumph, nor was there breath enough left in any of us for an exclamation of joy in the hour of victory. Nothing was said or done for several minutes; we just sat down and rested. But five minutes afterwards we had recovered and were as comfortable as at sea-level so long as we neither moved nor attempted to do anything, though I had lost my voice and the others were quite hoarse. The cane flag-staff we had brought up in sections was planted in the snow and a little Union Jack set waving: but, alas! none but ourselves could see it, for most of the lower regions were buried in a sea of clouds, and La Paz in particular was hidden. A flag-staff erected in snow will

not stand many hours. This one fell before clear weather returned, and never showed itself through the telescope of the Jesuit Fathers at La Paz, who looked out for it at the first opportunity.

Notwithstanding the fog below, the view was impressive, for we stood out in clear air and brilliant sunshine, with towering clouds and snowy peaks near at hand. The peaks, draped in broken ice, were magnificent. The southward continuation of the Cordillera likewise lifted itself into sight, but of Mount Sorata and the northern range we saw nothing, while only patches of the Bolivian plain were seen through gaps in its nebulous covering. The descent was easy enough till we came to the foot of the Pico del Indio and had to reascend. There I thought my heart would burst, so excessive was the toil. Twelve short steps and a halt, twelve more and another halt, and so on, with deep breathing between whiles to recover the power of motion. It was a dreadful hour, but it came to an end, and we could throw ourselves down at last on the mound of rock by the little snow-saddle and cast a last look back upon our conquered giant.

My hand touched something soft and clammy lying on the rock beside me. What could there be of that sort in such a place? I picked it up. It was a rotten piece of Indian woollen cord, swollen to the thickness of one's wrist. Maquignaz, to whom I gave it, unfortunately lost it on the way down. Tradition at Caimbaya asserts that many years ago an Indian desperately dared to invade the secret places of the great god Illimani. He was last seen from below, seated on this point where now we sat. He never came back to the abodes of men, for the god turned him into stone.

That there is some foundation for the tale is proved by our discovery of the piece of rope; so I named the peak beside this place Pico del Indio.

From "The Bolivian Andes"

THE ASCENT OF MONT BLANC

Alexandre Dumas

THE determination to reach the summit of Mont Blanc was jogging in my brain night and day. During the day I used to ascend the Brévent, where I passed hours in trying to see a way to my coveted summit. I felt that I should live in a sort of purgatory if I did not succeed, and I could not resist this impulse to go to the Brévent. At night I had hardly closed my eyes when I dreamt that I was on my climb of discovery. . . .

In one of my dreams I fixed my nails into the rock that they might act like cramps—I felt I was going to fall—I said to myself: "Jacques Balmat, my friend, if thou dost not catch hold of that branch above thy head, thine account will soon be settled."—The accursed branch could only be touched with the tips of my fingers—I raised myself up by my knees like a chimney sweep. Ah, that branch! now I clutched at it! I shall never forget that night! my wife awoke me with a great slap—imagine! I was sticking fast to her ear all the time, and drawing it out as if it had been a piece of india-rubber! After such an affair as this I said: "Jacques Balmat, you must now get the right sort of heart in earnest!" I thereupon got out of bed and put on my gaiters. "Where art thou going?" said my wife. "In search of crystals," I replied—I would not tell her what I was going to do. "Do not thou be anxious if thou dost not see me this evening; if I have not returned by nine o'clock I shall sleep on the mountain."

I took a strong stock with good iron points, double the length and thickness of an ordinary one. I filled a gourd with *eau-de-vie*. I put a morsel of bread in my pocket, and away I started.

I had repeatedly tried to ascend by the "Mer de Glace": but the Mont Maudit had always barred my way. Then I used to return by the Aiguille du Goûter; but to ascend from

there to the Dôme du Goûter, there is an *arête* (a backbone of rock) a quarter of a league long, and from one to two feet wide, and below a depth of 1800 feet! This time I was resolved to try another route. I began by the one which leads to the mountain of the Côte; after three hours' ascent, I reached the Glacier des Boissons: I crossed it—it was not difficult to do so; four hours later I was at the Grands-Mulets —that was something. I had earned my breakfast—I ate a crust and drank off a cup. So far so good: but one had not then mounted so often to the Grands-Mulets as to find a plateau—one was not quite at one's ease there, I can assure you. At the end of two hours and a half of research I found a place bare of snow for about six or seven feet—it was here I determined to await the coming day—it was then about seven o'clock. It was better to stay here than on the snow. I broke off my second crust and drank my second draught; then I installed myself on the rock where I was going to pass the night.

It did not take me long to make my bed. Towards nine o'clock I saw a shadow rise from the valley like a thick smoke; it advanced slowly towards me. At half-past nine it reached and enveloped me. Notwithstanding this shroud, I could see above me the last reflected rays of the setting sun which seemed loath to leave the highest point of Mont Blanc. But they did disappear—and with them the day. Turned as I was towards Chamonix, I had, on my left side the immense plain of snow which reaches to the Dôme du Goûter, and on my right—within reach of my hand—a precipice 800 feet deep: I dared not go to sleep for fear of falling outside my bed whilst dreaming. I sat on my bag and stamped my feet and clapped my hands incessantly to keep up the circulation. Soon the moon rose; pale, veiled in a circle of clouds; at eleven I saw a nasty mist-cloud coming from the Aiguille du Goûter, which as soon as it reached me smacked me in the face with a dash of snow:—when I had covered my face with my handkerchief I said, "Good! get along with you!"

Every moment I heard the fall of avalanches which roll down with a horrible rumbling sound like thunder. The glaciers cracked, and with every crack the mountain shook under me. Neither hungry nor thirsty was I, but I experienced a singular kind of headache, the pain beginning at the crown of the head and reaching to the eyebrows. The mist-fog continued; my breath became congealed on my handkerchief; the snow having penetrated through my clothes, I felt as if I were naked. I redoubled my movements and compelled myself to sing in order to drive away a heap of horrible ideas which began to haunt my mind.

But my voice was lost in the snow: no echo answered to it: all was deathlike in the midst of this frozen nature; and thus my voice had a strange effect upon me: I became afraid that I should commit suicide.

At last, at two o'clock, the sky began to whiten towards the east; I felt my courage returning as the sun arose and struggled with the clouds which shrouded Mont Blanc. I trusted that he would chase them away, but at four o'clock they became more dense; the effects of the sun becoming feebler, I came to the conclusion that it would be impossible to ascend further that day; but in order not to waste such an opportunity, I explored the neighbouring glaciers and spent the whole day in reconnoitring the best passages. As evening advanced and the mists followed, I descended to the Bec-à-l'Oiseau, where night overtook me. I passed this one better than the last as I was not upon the ice and could sleep a little:—I awoke frozen through and through:—and it was only at the village of Moud that my clothes began to thaw.

I had gone about a hundred steps past the last houses in this village when I met François Paccard, Joseph Carrier, and Jean Michel Fournier—three guides—they had their bags and *bâtons*, and wore their climbing costume. I asked them where they were bound for—they replied that they were in search of some goats which they had given to the

care of some shepherds—but, as these animals were not worth more than four francs each, this answer made me think that they wished to deceive me. I felt convinced that they were going to attempt the ascent, in which I had failed, and consequently to obtain the reward which de Saussure had promised to the first who should reach the summit of Mont Blanc. One or two questions which Paccard put to me about different points, and whether one could sleep at the Bec-à-l'Oiseau confirmed me in my opinion. I replied that it was covered with snow, and that as a station it appeared to me unadvisable. I then saw him exchange a sign with the others, which I pretended not to notice; they retired apart and consulted together, and ended by proposing that we should all ascend together:—I accepted—but having promised my wife that I would not stay away more than three days, and not wishing to break my promise, I went home to tell her not to be uneasy, to change my stockings and gaiters, and to get some provisions.

At eleven o'clock at night I started again without having been in bed; and at one o'clock I rejoined my comrades at the Bec-à-l'Oiseau, four leagues below where I had slept the evening before. They were sleeping like marmots. I awoke them—in an instant they were all on their feet, and we all four set forward on our journey. This day we crossed the glacier of Tacconnay, and ascended as far as the Grands-Mulets, where two nights before I had passed such hideous hours; then taking a course to the right, about three o'clock we reached the Dôme du Goûter. Already one of us, Paccard, was short of wind; a little above the Grands-Mulets he had lain down, covered with the coat of one of his comrades. Arriving at last at the top of the Dôme we saw something black moving on the Aiguille du Goûter; we could not distinguish what it was; we could not tell whether it were a man or a chamois. We shouted out, and something answered us —we remained silent awaiting a second cry; when these words reached us: "*Ohé!* Halt! there are others who wish to

ascend with you." We halted; and whilst waiting, Paccard, who had regained his wind, arrived.

At the end of half an hour the newcomers joined us; they were Pierre Balmat and Marie Coutet, who had made a bet with others that they would reach the Dôme du Goûter before us. They had lost their bet. During this time, to utilise every moment, I went on a voyage of discovery. I 'clomb' towards the *arête*, now called the Bosse du Dromadaire, and got a quarter of a league nearer to the animal, on the aforesaid *arête*.

Soon after I had quitted the others they had tried the same path, and had come to the conclusion that they were attempting the impossible. It was a rope-dancer's path—but that was all the same to me. I believe that I should have succeeded in reaching the end of it, if it had not been cut in two with 'crevasses'; besides, the *arête* was so sharp one could not walk upon it, so not wishing to have to return backwards and astride, I retraced my steps to the place where I had left my comrades. I found however nothing but my bag—they had all gone!! At the sight of such temerity, and seeing that nothing would deter me, they left me, and quickly took the path with their backs towards Chamonix, supposing that I, being agile, would soon catch them up. I found myself then alone, and for an instant I was as it were suspended between the wish to join them and the desire to attempt the ascent by myself.

Their desertion had piqued me; something told me that I should succeed this time. I took up my bag and once more set off. It was now four in the afternoon. I crossed the Grand Plateau as far as the glacier of Brevna, from whence I could see Courmayeur and the valley D'Aosta in Piedmont. The mist was on the summit of Mont Blanc. I did not attempt to ascend, less from a fear that I should lose myself, than from a feeling of certainty that the others *not seeing* me on the summit would never believe that I had reached it. I took advantage of what remained of the day to seek a shelter, and

spent an hour in vain in so doing; and, as I recollected that awful night—you know—I resolved to return home. I commenced my descent, but when I arrived at the Grand Plateau, not having provided myself with spectacles or a green veil, the snow had so fatigued my eyes that I could see nothing. I had a kind of dazzling giddiness, which caused me to see great drops of blood. I sat down in order to restore myself; I let my head fall between my hands; at the end of half an hour my sight had come back, but the night had come with it; I had no time to lose. I arose to go, but had scarcely taken a hundred steps when I felt by my *bâton* that there was no depth of ice under my feet. I was at the edge of the great crevasse in which the three guides had been lost. "Ah!" I said to it, "I know thee." In fact, in the morning we had crossed it by a bridge of ice covered with snow—this I tried to find; but the night was growing darker and darker, and my sight worse and worse.—I could not find it.

The pain in my head, of which I have spoken, again attacked me; I felt no desire to eat or drink; violent palpitations of the heart made me almost vomit. I must make up my mind to remain close to the crevasse till daybreak; to find the bridge of ice would take me another hour. I put down my bag on the snow; made a curtain of my handkerchief, and did my best to prepare for such a night as before. Being 12,000 feet high, I must expect a much more intense cold. A fine needle-like snow froze me; I felt a languor and an irresistible desire to sleep; thoughts the most sad came across my mind, like unto those of death. I knew that these gloomy ideas and this longing for sleep were bad signs, and that if I had the misfortune to close my eyes in sleep, I should never open them again. From the place where I was I could see the lights of Chamonix where my comrades who had deserted me, were warming themselves by their firesides, or were comfortably in bed. Perhaps not one of them (I said to myself) has given me a thought; or if one of them has thought of Balmat, he says, whilst rousing the embers of his

fire, or pulling the coverlet more over his ears: "At this moment that imbecile of a Balmat is amusing himself by beating the soles of his boots together!" "Keep up your courage, Balmat!" It was not that I wanted courage now, but strength;—man is not made of iron—and I felt that I was ill. In the short intervals of silence between the momentary falls of avalanches and the cracking of the glacier, I heard the barking of a dog in the village of Courmayeur, although the village was a league and a half from where I was. This noise took my thoughts away from myself; it was the only sound from the world below which reached me. Towards midnight the dog ceased to bark, and I fell back into that terrible silence which was like unto that of a churchyard:—for I took no account of the noise of the avalanches and of the glaciers, whose sounds frightened me. About two o'clock I saw the same white line, of which I have already spoken, dawn on the horizon; the sun followed it as before, and Mont Blanc had also put on his wig; and when he does that, he is in a bad humour and one must not provoke him. I know his character, and I think it right to let others know it too. As we say in the valley: "When he smokes his pipe, one must not try to put it out." At last when daybreak came, I was frozen; but by dint of friction, and practising the most absurd gymnastics, my limbs became more supple, and I was able to begin exploring once more. I had observed, when descending to the Grand Plateau, that half-way down there was an incline—steep it is true—but everywhere accessible, and leading straight to the top of the Rochers Rouges. I decided to scale it; but found it so steep and the snow so hard that I could only hold on by making holes with the iron point of my stock; I succeeded in clinging to it, but I felt extreme fatigue and weariness. It was not an amusing thing to be suspended by one leg—so to speak—with an abyss under one; and to be obliged to cut the ice with the already blunted point of an alpenstock. At length by force of patience and perseverance I gained the Rochers Rouges. "Oh!" said I, "*from*

this spot to the summit there's nothing more to hinder you; all is joined together like one piece of ice!!" But I was again frozen through and through, and almost dead with hunger and thirst; it was late;—I *must* descend—but this time with a *certainty* of succeeding during the first spell of propitious weather.

When I reached home I was almost blind, and I slept for 48 hours without waking. Three weeks passed without bringing any favourable change in the weather, and without diminishing my ardour to make the third attempt. I imparted the secret of my discovery to Dr Paccard, and associated him with my future intentions. It was agreed that we should start together the first fine day.

At last on the 8th day of August, 1786, the weather appeared sufficiently settled to hazard another trial. I went to Paccard and said to him, "Now, Doctor, are you up to it? Have you any fear of snow; of ice; of precipices? Speak out like a man." "I have fear of naught when I am with thee, Balmat!" replied Paccard. "Well, then," I said, "the moment has come to creep upon La Taupinière."

The doctor said he was quite ready, but when he was about to shut his door, I think his courage began to fail him a little, for the key would not leave the lock—he turned it first one way and then another. "Stay, Balmat" said he, "we should do well to take two guides with us." "No," I replied, "I ascend with you alone, or you ascend with others. I wish to be the first, not the second." He reflected for a moment, then drew out the key, put it into his pocket, and followed me mechanically with bent head. In another instant he pricked up his ears.—"Ah, well! I have confidence in thee, Balmat. Go on! For the rest, God's mercy!" Then he began to sing, but not quite in tune. This seemed to worry the Doctor. Whereupon I took his arm, and said, "This is not all, Doctor; no one must know of our project except our wives." A third person was, however, obliged to be taken into our confidence; the shopkeeper of whom we bought the syrup to mix with

our *eau-de-vie*, which, unmixed, would have been too strong for such an undertaking as ours. As this woman was incredulous about what we told her, we invited her to look the next morning at nine o'clock, towards the side of the Dôme du Goûter. All our little matters being settled, we bade adieu to our wives and departed about five in the afternoon, one taking one side of the Arve, and the other the other, so that no one might suspect where we were going, and we met again at the village of La Côte or Du Mont. I had brought a coverlet, which served to enwrap the Doctor as they swathe an infant.

Thanks to this precaution he passed a good night; as for me, I slept without waking till half-past one. At two the white line appeared; and soon the sun rose without a cloud, without a mist, beautiful and brilliant, promising us a famous journey at last. In a quarter of an hour's time we were engaged with the glacier of Taconnaz, which we crossed without any accident, and soon we left the Grands-Mulets below us. I showed the Doctor where I had spent the night; he made a significant grimace and kept silence for some minutes—then, stopping all at once, said, "Dost thou think, Balmat, that we shall arrive to-day at the top of Mont Blanc?" I saw well what he was coming to—but I reassured him laughingly, without promising him anything. We went on for two hours and reached the Grand Plateau. The wind overtook us and became stronger and stronger. At length, after having scaled that well-remembered vertical barrier, we reached the rock of the Petits-Mulets. Here a gust of wind carried away the Doctor's hat, although it was tied on. Hearing his exclamation I turned round, and beheld his comfortable cap bounding down towards Courmayeur. He looked as if he were going after it with outstretched arms. "Oh!" said I, "we shall never see it again! it has gone into Piedmont; *bon voyage!*" It seemed as if the wind took offence at this pleasantry, for scarcely had I shut my mouth when there came so violent a blast that we were obliged to lie flat on our faces in order not to follow the hat. We were not able to get up for ten minutes;

the wind thrashed the mountains and passed whistling over our heads. The Doctor was discouraged:—I only thought of the shopkeeper, who ought to be looking out for us at that moment to see if we were on the Dôme du Goûter. At the first respite the hurricane gave us, I got up; but the Doctor would only consent to follow on his hands and knees. In this way we pursued the course of a small mountain until we could see from it the village of Chamonix. Having gained this point, with my glasses I made out, 12,000 feet below us in the valley, our commercial friend with about fifty others looking at us through their telescopes. A feeling of dignity made the Doctor rise to his feet;—the moment he stood up we saw that we were recognized—he by his great coat, I by my usual clothes. The people in the valley saluted us with their hats; I replied with mine;—that of the Doctor was absent on an indefinite holiday. Paccard had spent all his energy in rising to his feet, and neither by the encouragements which he received from below, nor by those which I gave him, could he be induced to continue the ascent. After exhausting all my eloquence, and seeing I should only lose time, I told him to keep himself as warm as he could, and not to stand still. He listened without understanding me, and replied "Yes—yes," in order to get rid of me. I knew he must be suffering from the cold; I myself was almost paralysed; I left him the bottle and started off alone, telling him that I would come and fetch him. "Yes—yes," he replied. I urged him again not to stand still, and off I went. I had not gone thirty paces when I returned, and found him, instead of moving about and stamping with his feet, sitting down, with his back to the glacial wind. This was at all events some precaution.

From this moment there was no great difficulty to encounter; but the higher I mounted the less easy was it for me to breathe; every ten steps I was obliged to stop like an asthmatic man; it seemed as if I had no lungs, and that my chest was empty. I tied my handkerchief round my mouth and breathed through it, and this relieved me a little. The

cold had become almost insupportable: it took me an hour to walk a quarter of a league. Still I went on, with head bent down, until, all at once, coming to a point which I did not recognize, I lifted my head, and lo! and behold!—at *last* I had conquered Mont Blanc!

Then I cast my eyes around me—trembling lest I had deceived myself and I should find some *aiguille*, some new point which I had not the power to ascend; for the joints of my legs seemed to be kept in their places only by the aid of my trousers. No—I was at the end of so many explorings, so many unfruitful researches. I had reached the goal where no one had as yet been, not even the eagle or the chamois; alone, I was here, without other aid than my will and my strength; all that surrounded me seemed to belong to me. It was four o'clock when I contemplated this giddy panorama; I looked down on Chamonix, I waved my hat, I saw through my glass that they replied by doing the same. All the village was on the "Place."

The first moment of exultation over, I thought of my poor Doctor. I descended as quickly as possible, calling out his name, and was terrified by not hearing him answer me; at the end of a quarter of an hour I saw him in the distance, round as a ball, but making no movement in spite of my shouts, which certainly must have reached him. I found him with his head between his knees, crouched like a sleeping cat. I took him by the shoulder; he raised his head mechanically. I told him that I had reached the summit of Mont Blanc; this news seemed to interest him in the most mediocre way, for in reply he asked where he could go to bed and to sleep. I told him that he had come to ascend Mont Blanc, and ascend it he should. I raised him up; I took him by the shoulders and made him walk some steps; he was as if drunk, and it appeared all the same to him whether he went to the one side or the other, uphill or downhill. However, the exercise I made him take restored his circulation a little, and he asked me if I had accidentally put into my pocket the hare-

skin gloves which I had made expressly for my ascents, and which we call here *mitaine*, being without separation between the fingers. Situated as I then was, I would have refused them *both* to my own brother;—I gave him one of them.

At six o'clock I was once more on the summit of Mont Blanc, and my worthy Doctor too. Although the sun still shed bright rays of light, the sky was of a deep, dark blue, and I could see the stars shining. Below us were ice, snow, rocks, pines; a panorama impossible to describe. I tried to make my Doctor a partaker of the ecstasy into which the spectacle which unfolded itself before our eyes had plunged me:—it was in vain; he saw nothing; the state in which he was had deprived him of his morale, and the effort to make him enjoy such contemplation was labour lost. As for me, I suffered no longer, I was no longer fatigued. I scarcely felt that difficulty of breathing which an hour ago had almost made me abandon my undertaking. In this state of rapture I remained on the summit for thirty minutes. It was seven o'clock—we had but two more hours of daylight—we must descend. I took hold of Paccard, I waved my hat as a last signal, and we began our downward journey. There was no track to direct us; the wind was so cold that even the surface of the snow was not melted; all we found was here and there on the ice the small holes which our stocks had made. Paccard was like a child, without energy or will; I guided him when the way was easy and when it was difficult I carried him. Night began to fall whilst we crossed the crevasse at the foot of the Grand Plateau. It came upon us all at once. At each step Paccard stopped, declaring he would go no further; I made him go on, not by persuasion, which he no longer understood, but by sheer force. At eleven o'clock we left the regions of ice, and placed our feet on firm ground. It was more than three hours since we had lost all reflection from the sun; this being the case I permitted Paccard to halt; and when preparing to wrap him again in the rug, I found that he did not help me as before. On my remarking this to him, "It is for the best of all reasons,"

said he, "I have no longer any use or feeling in my hands." I drew off his gloves; his hands were as white as those of death. As for myself, the hand on which was the leather glove, in place of the hare-skin one, was in the same condition as his two. I said to him: "Out of four hands, three are of no use." This communication did not interest him: all he desired was to lie down and sleep. But he said, "Rub the frozen part with snow, the remedy is not far to seek." I began the operation with him, and ended it with myself; soon the circulation was restored, and with it the warmth, but with it pain as acute as if each vein were being pricked with needles. I rolled my baby in his swaddling clothes and lay down under the shelter of a rock; we ate a morsel, and drank a drop, lay as close to each other as possible, and fell asleep. The next day at six, I was awakened by Paccard, who said, "It is strange, Balmat, I can hear the birds chirping and singing, yet I cannot see the daylight; perhaps I cannot open my eyes; see if they have become like those of the Grand Duke."

I told him that he was mistaken, that he ought to see. He then asked for some snow, which he melted in his hands and mixed with brandy, and applied to his eyelids;—this operation was of no avail, it only made them smart the more. "Balmat, I am blind!!" "It seems very like it," I replied. "How am I to descend?" "Take hold of the strap of my bag, and walk behind me. That is the way!" By this means we reached the village of Côte.

As I feared that my wife would be anxious, I left the Doctor, who felt his way home by tapping with his stock, and I returned to mine. When I beheld myself! I was not recognizable. I had red eyes, a black face, and blue lips; each time that I yawned or laughed the blood spirted from my lips; in fact I was a spectre!...

Four days afterwards I set out for Geneva to announce the news to M. de Saussure—but some Englishmen had already preceded me in this mission.

From "Impressions de Voyage"

SWITZERLAND

A. D. Godley

In the steamy, stuffy Midlands, 'neath an English summer sky,
When the holidays are nearing with the closing of July,
And experienced Alpine stagers and impetuous recruits
Are renewing with the season their continual disputes—
Those inveterate disputes
On the newest Alpine routes—
And inspecting the condition of their mountaineering boots:
. . . . . .
You may stifle your reflections, you may banish them afar,
You may try to draw a solace from the thought of 'Nächstes Jahr'—
But your heart is with those climbers, and you'll feverishly yearn
To be crossing of the Channel with your luggage labelled 'Bern,'
Leaving England far astern
With a ticket through to Bern,
And regarding your profession with a lordly unconcern!
. . . . . .
They will lie beside the torrent, just as you were wont to do,
With the woodland green around them and a snowfield shining through:
They will tread the higher pastures, where celestial breezes blow,
While the valley lies in shadow and the peaks are all aglow—
Where the airs of heaven blow
'Twixt the pine woods and the snow,
And the shades of evening deepen in the valley far below:
. . . . . .
They will scale the mountain strongholds that in days of old you won,
They will plod behind the lantern ere the rising of the sun,

On a "grat" or in a chimney, on the steep and dizzy slope,
For a foothold or a handhold they will diligently grope—
On the rocky, icy slope
(Where we'll charitably hope
'Tis assistance only Moral that they're getting from a rope);

. . . . . .

They will dine on mule and marmot, and on mutton made of goats,
They will face the various horrors of Helvetian *table-d'hôtes*;
But whate'er the paths that lead them, and the food whereon they fare,
They will taste the joy of living, as you only taste it there,
As you taste it Only There
In the higher, purer air,
Unapproachable by worries and oblivious quite of care!

. . . . . .

Place me somewhere in the Valais, 'mid the mountains west of Binn,
West of Binn and east of Savoy, in a decent kind of inn,
With a peak or two for climbing, and a glacier to explore—
Any mountains will content me, though they've all been climbed before.
Yes! I care not any more,
Though they've all been done before,
And the names they keep in bottles may be numbered by the score!

. . . . . .

Though the hand of Time be heavy; though your ancient comrades fail:
Though the mountains you ascended be accessible by rail:
Though your nerve begin to weaken, and you're gouty grown and fat,
And prefer to walk in places which are reasonably flat—
Though you grow so very fat
That you climb the Gorner Grat

Or perhaps the Little Scheideck—and are rather proud of that:

Yet I hope that till you die
You will annually sigh
For a vision of the Valais with the coming of July,
For the Oberland or Valais and the higher, purer air,
And the true delight of living, as you taste it only there.

From "Second Strings"

MANFRED ON THE JUNGFRAU

Lord Byron

Voice of the SECOND SPIRIT

MONT BLANC is the monarch of mountains;
They crown'd him long ago
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
With a diadem of snow.
Around his waist are forests braced,
The Avalanche in his hand;
But ere it fall, that thundering ball
Must pause for my command.
The Glacier's cold and restless mass
Moves onward day by day;
But I am he who bids it pass,
Or with its ice delay.
I am the spirit of the place,
Could make the mountain bow
And quiver to his cavern'd base—
And what with me wouldst *Thou*?

ACT I, SCENE I

The Mountain of the Jungfrau

MANFRED. The spirits I have raised abandon me,
The spells which I have studied baffle me,

The remedy I reck'd of tortured me;
I lean no more on superhuman aid;
It hath no power upon the past, and for
The future, till the past be gulfed in darkness,
It is not of my search.—My Mother Earth!
And thou fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.
And thou, the bright eye of the universe,
That openest over all, and unto all
Art a delight—thou shin'st not on my heart.
And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge
I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath
Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
In dizziness of distance; when a leap,
A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring
My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
To rest for ever—wherefore do I pause?
I feel the impulse—yet I do not plunge;
I see the peril—yet do not recede;
And my brain reels—and yet my foot is firm:
There is a power upon me which withholds,
And makes it my fatality to live,—
If it be life to wear within myself
This barrenness of spirit, and to be
My own soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself—
The last infirmity of evil. Ay,
Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister,
[*An eagle passes*
Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
Well may'st thou swoop so near me—I should be
Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets; thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee; but thine
Yet pierces downward, onward or above,
With a pervading vision.—Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this visible world!

How glorious in its action and itself!
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will,
Till our mortality predominates,
And men are—what they name not to themselves,
And trust not to each other. Hark! the note,
[*The Shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.*
The natural music of the mountain reed—
For here the patriarchal days are not
A pastoral fable—pipes in the liberal air,
Mix'd with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd;
My soul would drink those echoes. Oh, that I were
The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony,
A bodiless enjoyment—born and dying
With the blest tone which made me!

Enter from below a CHAMOIS-HUNTER

CHAMOIS-HUNTER. Even so
This way the chamois leapt: her nimble feet
Have baffled me; my gains to-day will scarce
Repay my break-neck travail.—What is here?
Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath reach'd
A height which none even of our mountaineers,
Save our best hunters, may attain: his garb
Is goodly, his mien manly, and his air
Proud as a free-born peasant's, at this distance:
I will approach him nearer.

MANFRED [*not perceiving the other*]. To be thus—
Grey-hair'd with anguish, like these blasted pines,
Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,
A blighted trunk upon a cursed root,

Which but supplies a feeling to decay—
And to be thus, eternally but thus,
Having been otherwise! Now furrow'd o'er
With wrinkles, ploughed by moments,—not by years,—
And hours, all tortured into ages—hours
Which I outlive!—Ye toppling crags of ice!
Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down
In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!
I hear ye momently above, beneath,
Crash with a frequent conflict; but ye pass,
And only fall on things that still would live;
On the young flourishing forest, or the hut
And hamlet of the harmless villager.

CHAMOIS-HUNTER. The mists begin to rise from up the valley;
I'll warn him to descend, or he may chance
To lose at once his way and life together.

MANFRED. The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell,
Whose every wave breaks on a living shore,
Heap'd with the damn'd like pebbles.—I am giddy.

CHAMOIS-HUNTER. I must approach him cautiously; if near,
A sudden step will startle him, and he
Seems tottering already.

MANFRED. Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock
Rocking their Alpine brethren; filling up
The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters;
Damming the rivers with a sudden dash,
Which crush'd the waters into mist and made
Their fountains find another channel—thus,
Thus, in its old age, did Mount Rosenbery—
Why stood I not beneath it?

CHAMOIS-HUNTER. Friend! have a care,
Your next step may be fatal!—for the love

Of Him who made you, stand not on that brink!

MANFRED [*not hearing him*]. Such would have been for me
a fitting tomb;
My bones had then been quiet in their depth;
They had not then been strewn upon the rocks
For the wind's pastime—as thus—thus they shall be—
In this one plunge.—Farewell, ye opening heavens!
Look not upon me thus reproachfully—
You were not meant for me—Earth! take these atoms!

[*As* MANFRED *is in act to spring from the cliff, the* CHAMOIS-HUNTER *seizes and retains him with a sudden grasp.*

ACT I, SCENE II

A lower valley in the Alps.—A cataract

Enter MANFRED

It is not noon—the sunbow's rays still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven,
And roll the sheeted silver's waving column
O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular,
And fling its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail,
The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death,
As told in the Apocalypse. No eyes
But mine now drink this sight of loveliness;
I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters.—I will call her.

[MANFRED *takes some of the water into the palm of his hand, and flings it into the air, muttering the adjuration. After a pause, the* WITCH OF THE ALPS *rises beneath the arch of the sunbow of the torrent.*

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form
The charms of earth's least mortal daughters grow

MANFRED ON THE JUNGFRAU

To an unearthly stature, in an essence
Of purer elements; while the hues of youth,—
Carnation'd like a sleeping infant's cheek,
Rock'd by the beating of her mother's heart,
Or the rose tints, which summer's twilight leaves
Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow,
The blush of earth embracing with her heaven,—
Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
The beauties of the sunbow which bends o'er thee.
Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,
Wherein is glassed serenity of soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,
I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit
At times to commune with them—if that he
Avail him of his spells—to call thee thus,
And gaze on thee a moment.

ACT II, SCENE II

From "Manfred"